

The value of positive humour in the workplace

by

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THE VALUE OF POSITIVE HUMOUR IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

The purpose and value of humour as a human characteristic has been debated by philosophers for centuries. However, the use of humour in workplaces remains a contentious issue in management theory to this day. Some academics and philosophers praise humour and encourage its use; others see it as a frivolous distraction from the job-at-hand. This study details the history of the acceptance of humour as a positive human attribute and its possible impact on contemporary workplace management practices.

The dichotomy of opinion around the use of humour in the workplace appears to stem from a lack of clarity around the ‘style’ of humour being considered in a workplace context. A *Humour Style Questionnaire* developed by Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir (2003) provided a tool for researchers to differentiate the humour style preferences being displayed in workplaces. This has enabled more targeted and meaningful research to be undertaken. Researchers can now look specifically at workplace humour which is predominantly affiliative, inclusive and uplifting, to determine if this specific style of humour is of value in terms of enhanced worker attitude and performance leading to improvements in productivity.

At the same time, studies are also emerging that show that workplaces are benefiting from the application of positive psychology in enhancing workplace satisfaction, motivation and productivity. Also emerging from the field of positive psychology, Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) developed a concept called *psychological capital* (or PsyCap) based on the

capacities of self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism associated with improved organisational productivity.

Luthans et al., (2007) suggested that humour, along with a range of other positive capacities, is also a potential indicator of PsyCap. They observed that humour, generally, has a positive social impact for both the deliverer and the recipient of that humour. However they also warned of the potential downside in which use of inappropriate humour (negative humour) has been found to alienate others and can lead to social isolation for the deliverer and apprehension by those observing this behaviour. They conclude that inappropriate humour may lead to reduced group cohesion.

Given these observations, the differentiation between positive humour and negative humour was paramount in this research as was an exploration of the relationship between PsyCap and *positive* humour. Specifically, the study examined both the use and style of humour in workplaces and its relationship with the PsyCap of employees. It also investigated the relationship between positive humour, psychological capital and indicators of workplace productivity from employee self-reports and supervisors' assessments. Finally, it examined whether the team supervisor's own sense of humour and the extent of a 'fun' team climate moderated these relationships of interest.

A survey questionnaire was developed from the literature and was completed by 303 individual participants from 50 Australian work teams. These self-report instruments were complemented by a questionnaire completed by each participating work team's supervisor. The supervisors' questionnaire included questions relating to each of their participating subordinate's teamwork and helping behaviours; creativity and innovative thinking;

discretionary effort and civic virtue; and productivity and contribution to organisational effectiveness.

The data collected were used in a confirmatory factor analysis exploring whether or not humour fits empirically with the PsyCap construct. Results for a model of positive humour and PsyCap achieved satisfactory fit, showing evidence of convergent validity. A number of linear regressions were used to test a series of hypotheses. Results were mixed but overall supportive of the value of using, or at least allowing, positive humour to be a part of workplace cultures.

This study appears to be the first to examine the relationship between positive humour and PsyCap. It is also one of the few studies that demonstrate the potentially helpful effects of these constructs on workplace productivity. The implications for workplaces are simple. Appropriate, positive humour used at work is not detrimental to productivity but is shown to contribute to employees' performance and positive attitude towards their workplaces.

Key words: Humour, humour style, sense of humour, psychological capital, confidence, resilience, optimism, hope, organisational culture, job satisfaction, performance, attitude and productivity.

Language: This paper uses the English spelling of ‘humour’, except when citing titles or verbatim quotes from American source documents in which the spelling is ‘humor’.

Similarly the English spelling of words such as ‘organisation’, ‘behaviour’ and ‘centre’ is used throughout.

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This work is an infinitesimal and modest step in what I believe to be a positive direction for humankind. But for me it has been a seven-year labour of love, analogous to a mountainous trek in winter. So I needed heaps of support and encouragement and that was readily and generously given by the following people.

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To anyone else contemplating a PhD study as a (very) mature-aged, part-time student, may I recommend my (yet-to-be-written) book *The loneliness of the long-distance PhD researcher*.

Just joking! It has been fun – which is, after all, what this whole exercise is all about.

Declaration of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

Daryl R Peebles

Dated 21 / October / 2015

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Table of contents	Page number
An abstract	i
Key words	iv
Language	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Declaration of originality	vi
Authority of Access	vi
Table of contents	vii
List of diagrams	xiv
List of tables	xiv
Preface A context and the motivation for studying humour in the workplace	1
Chapter 1 Introduction	
1.1 A changing work environment calls for changing human resource management practices	5
1.2 A brief rationale for linking humour with Psychological Capital	13
1.3 Organisational value	14
1.3 The aims of the current research	15
1.4 Thesis structure and chapter content	17
Chapter 2 Literature Review	
Humour – from an historical perspective to a contemporary understanding of its use and benefits	20
2.1 Humour – an overview	21
2.1.1 A history of humour study and research	22
2.1.2 Research focussing on laughter	22
2.1.3 Humour and health	29

2.1.4	Humour and stress	30
2.1.5	A clarification of definitions	32
2.1.6	The definition of humour used in the current research	34
2.2	Operationalising humour in academic research	36
2.3	Adaptive humour styles	42
2.3.1	A differentiation of humour styles	42
2.4	Humour in the workplace	45
2.4.1	Some reported benefits of humour and laughter in the workplace	47
2.4.2	Work attitudes and performance	49
2.4.3	Fostering a ‘fun climate’ in the workplace	51
2.4.4	Humour and leadership	55
2.5	Chapter summary	57
Chapter 3	Literature Review	
	Positivity – from Happiness and Wellbeing to Psychological Capital and humour	59
3.1	Happiness, wellbeing and positivity in organisations	60
3.2	Positive psychology	64
3.3	Positive Organisational Scholarship and Positive Organisational Behaviour	67
3.3.1	Positive Organisational Scholarship	68
3.3.2	Positive Organisational Behaviour	69
3.4	Psychological Capital (PsyCap)	71
3.4.1	Hope	72
3.4.2	Optimism	72
3.4.3	Resilience	73
3.4.4	Self-efficacy	74
3.4.5	Other possible indicators for inclusion in the PsyCap construct	76

3.5	Humour and PsyCap	77
3.5.1	Humour and hope	78
3.5.2	Humour and optimism	79
3.5.3	Humour and resilience	80
3.5.4	Humour and self-efficacy	81
3.6	Positive humour as a possible PsyCap attribute	82
3.6.1	The relationship between humour and PsyCap	83
3.7	PsyCap, work attitudes and work performance	84
3.8	Chapter summary	86
Chapter 4	Research Methodology	88
4.1	Introduction and overview	88
4.1.1	Hypotheses listing	88
4.1.2	Data analysis strategy	89
4.2	Survey design	94
4.2.1	Survey-based methodology detail	97
4.3	Participants	98
4.3.1	Demographic detail	100
4.4	Procedure	101
4.4.1	Confidentiality	102
4.4.2	Ethics approval	102
4.5	Measures	103
4.5.1	Survey structure	103
4.5.2	PsyCap (PCQ-24)	105
4.5.3	Humour Style (HSQ-20)	106
4.5.4	Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS)	107

4.5.5	Job satisfaction, intention to stay and organisational commitment as an important cluster of employees' work attitudes	107
4.5.6	Fun Climate	109
4.5.7	Team work, creativity, contribution and discretionary effort as an important cluster of employees' work performance	109
4.6	Data analysis approach	110
4.6.1	Model fit	111
4.7	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	112
4.8	Linear regressions	114
4.9	Within group inter-rater reliability	115
Chapter 5	Results	118
5.1	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	119
5.1.1	CFA – PsyCap	119
5.1.2	CFA – Humour Styles	121
5.1.3	CFA – PsyCap including Humour Styles	124
5.1.4	CFA for outcome variables	127
5.1.4.1	CFA – Work performance	128
5.1.4.2	CFA - Work attitude	129
5.1.4.3	CFA - Fun Climate	131
5.2	Regression analysis	133
5.2.1	Testing the hypotheses	133
5.2.2	Linear regressions using Positive Humour	134
5.2.3	Team agreement on 'Fun Climate'	134
5.2.4	Analysis overview	136

5.3	Results summary	137
Chapter 6	Reflections and discussion	139
6.1	The aims of the study	139
6.1.1	Can the use of positive humour in workplaces enhance employee attitudes and performance?	140
6.1.2	What is the relationship between PsyCap and its constituent parts (hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism), and a positive humour style?	141
6.1.3	Can positive humour be considered along with hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism as a worthy addition to the construct PsyCap?	142
6.1.4	Is there a relationship between positive humour and PsyCap, and work performance and work attitudes?	143
6.1.5	Are the relationships between the above variables moderated by ‘fun climate’ at a team level?	143
6.1.6	Are the relationships between the above variables moderated by the self-assessed sense of humour of each team supervisor?	144
6.2	Key findings	145
6.3	Implications for organisations	146
6.4	Limitations of this research	149
6.4.1	Cultural considerations	152
6.4.2	When humour isn’t funny	155
6.5	Opportunities for future research	157
6.6	Conclusions	160

References	162
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Appendices

Appendix 1	Newspaper ‘situation vacant’ advertisements	197
Appendix 2	Biographies and newspaper reports illustrating the use of humour as a coping mechanism	198
Appendix 3	Suite of material sent to participating workplace supervisors and team members	200
Appendix 4	Individual participants’ questionnaire	205
Appendix 5	Supervisors’ questionnaire	218
Appendix 6	Correspondence with Dr Rod Martin	223
Appendix 7	HSQ-20 detail	224
Appendix 8	Correspondence with Mind Garden on behalf of Professor Fred Luthans	225
Appendix 9	Table of means, standard deviations and correlations	226
Appendix 10	Detailed analysis results	227
A10.1	Testing the new latent variable Positive Humour	227
A10.2	Testing the new latent variable PsyCap to include Positive Humour	228
A10.3	Testing the new latent variable Work Performance	229
A10.4	Testing the new latent variable Work Attitude	230
A10.5	H ₁ :1 Positive Humour and Work Performance	231
A10.6	H ₁ :2 Positive Humour and Work Attitudes	233
A 10.7	Using ‘Fun Climate’ as a moderator – a brief explanation	234
A10.8	H ₁ :3 Fun Climate, Positive Humour and Work Performance	235
A10.9	H ₁ :4 Fun Climate, Positive Humour and Work Attitude	237

A10.10	H ₁ :5	The moderating effect of a team's supervisor's sense of humour (MSHS) on the relationship between Positive Humour and Work Performance	239
A10.11	H ₁ :6	The moderating effect of a team's supervisor's sense of humour (MSHS) on the relationship between Positive Humour and Work Attitude	240
A10.12	H ₁ :7	Positive Humour and hope	241
A10.13	H ₁ :8	Positive Humour and optimism	243
A10.14	H ₁ :9	Positive Humour and resilience	245
A10.15	H ₁ :10	Positive Humour and self-efficacy	247
A10.16	H ₁ :11	Positive Humour and PsyCap	249
A10.17	H ₁ :12	PsyCap and Work Performance	251
A10.18	H ₁ :13	PsyCap and Work Attitudes	252
A10.19	H ₁ :14	PsyCap including Positive Humour and Work Performance	253
A10.20	H ₁ :15	PsyCap including Positive Humour and Work Attitudes	255
Appendix 11		Within-group team analysis	257
Appendix 12		A cultural reflection – looking at Australian humour use and preferences	259
Appendix 13		When humour isn't funny – a case study	264

List of diagrams

Figure 1.1	A diagrammatic overview of this study	16
Figure 5.1	Path diagram for PsyCap CFA testing	121
Figure 5.2	Path diagram for Humour Style CFA testing	122
Figure 5.3	The model for PsyCap, including Positive Humour, testing	124
Figure 5.4	Path diagram of structural model of PsyCap including Positive Humour	126
Figure 5.5	Path diagram of structural model for Work Performance	128
Figure 5.6	Path diagram of structural model for Work Attitude	130
Figure 5.7	Path diagram of structural model for Fun Climate	132

List of tables

Table 2.1	A list of instruments for measuring specific aspects of humour	39
Table 4.1	A list of hypotheses to be tested	88
Table 4.2	The analyses methods for testing hypotheses	90
Table 4.3	The demographic composition of the survey participants	100
Table 4.4	Instruments used in the survey	104
Table 4.5	Testing criteria to be used for data analysis	114
Table 5.1	Model fit for PsyCap (including Item 7)	119
Table 5.2	Model fit for PsyCap (excluding Item 7)	120
Table 5.3	Model fit information for Positive and Negative Humour Styles	123
Table 5.4	Model fit information for PsyCap including Positive Humour Style	127
Table 5.5	Model fit information for Work Performance	129
Table 5.6	Model fit information for Work Attitude	131
Table 5.7	Model fit information for Fun Climate	132

List of tables in appendices

Table A7.1	Correlations of short form scales (HSQ-20) with original HSQ-32	224
Table A7.2	Correlations among HSQ-20 scales	224
Table A9	Table of means, standard deviations and correlations	226
Table A10.1	Data for Positive Humour	227
Table A10.2	Data for PsyCap including Positive Humour	228
Table A10.3	Data for Work Performance	229
Table A10.4	Data for Work Attitude	230
Table A10.5	Positive Humour and Work Performance correlationtable	231
Table A10.6	Positive Humour and Work Performance correlationtable	233
Table A10.7	Coefficient table – Positive Humour, Fun Climate and Work Performance	235
Table A10.8	Coefficient table – Positive Humour, Fun Climate and Work Performance after r_{wg} analysis	236
Table A10.9	Coefficient table – Positive Humour, Fun Climate and Work Attitude	237
Table A10.10	Coefficient table – Positive Humour, Fun Climate and Work Attitude after r_{wg} analysis	238
Table A10.11	Model summary – moderating effect of Supervisors' Humour	239
Table A10.12	Coefficient table – Positive Humour, Supervisors' Humour and Work Performance	239
Table A10.13	Model summary – moderating effect of Supervisors' Humour	240
Table A10.14	Coefficient table – Positive Humour, Supervisors' Humour and Work Attitude	240
Table A10.15	Correlation - Positive Humour and Hope	241
Table A10.16	Correlation - Positive Humour and Optimism	243
Table A10.17	Correlation - Positive Humour and Resilience	245
Table A10.18	Correlation - Positive Humour and Self-efficacy	247

Table A10.19	Correlation - Positive Humour and PsyCap	249
Table A10.20	Correlation - PsyCap and Work Performance	251
Table A10.21	Correlation - PsyCap and Work Attitude	252
Table A10.22	Correlation - PsyCap plus Positive Humour and Work Performance	253
Table A10.23	Correlation - PsyCap plus Positive Humour and Work Attitude	255
Table A11	Within group team analysis (r_{wg} analysis results table)	257

PREFACE

A context and the motivation for studying humour in the workplace

Working as a human resource manager with a large national Australian organisation, the researcher observed differing productivity indicators between various sections of that organisation. One difference observed was that workers in sections that clearly demonstrated enjoyment in their work and were often observed ‘having fun’ whilst working, tended to have less absenteeism and displayed greater discretionary effort than other sections in which workers were expected to be solemn and where joy and laughter was frowned upon as being ‘unprofessional’. Moving from that organisation to an Australian State Government agency, again as a human resource manager, the researcher once more observed similar trends between sections within that agency and also between other State Government agencies with which he had professional dealings.

Although never empirically tested, the researcher’s observations whilst working as a human resource manager in these two scenarios suggested that the work team cultures were a significant factor in the differences observed. Typical of the behaviours exhibited by both of the ‘joyful’ and the ‘fun-less’ work cultures observed were banter and laughter in the former versus an almost library-like quietness in the latter; a high trust of employees to work unsupervised versus a low trust of the workers generally; enthusiasm, excitement and engagement versus boredom and low energy; affirming colleagues and leadership versus a culture of criticism and blame; and an overall upbeat joyfulness versus gloominess, fear and obvious symptoms of stress including conflict, absenteeism and staff turnover.

These observations led to a vague hypothetical question, “Is it possible that the use of, and management support for, appropriate humour in the workplace has a positive impact on the workplace culture and therefore improves happiness in the workplace and, possibly, productivity?” The original hypothesis for this study proposed that a work team that fostered a culture which included and encouraged humour would have a happy, healthy workforce and one that is measurably more productive than a team in which the culture is consistently serious and thereby excluded natural human emotions and expressions such as joy and laughter.

With the then-looming Work Choices legislation proposed by the Howard Liberal Government in 2007 the researcher’s interest in this topic developed a more altruistic objective. If such a hypothesis could be supported with empirical evidence, this study may inform Australian organisations as to better ways of improving productivity than the punitive approaches embedded in the proposed legislation. History closed the door on Work Choices with the election of the Rudd Labor Government in November 2007 but the interest in this proposal remained constant. At around this time the researcher also became actively involved in the *Employer of Choice* initiative in Australia and was intrigued at the number of organisations that indicated they encouraged ‘a fun and rewarding environment’ or ‘fun social events’ as part of their claim for being regarded as amongst Australia’s best employers. (see <http://www.business.tas.gov.au/employing-and-managing-people/retain-and-support/becoming-an-employer-of-choice>). When advertising staff vacancies, many of these organisations use words such as ‘a fun team’ or a ‘fun-filled workplace’ to encourage applicants. Contemporary examples of such advertisements are presented in Appendix 1 to illustrate this trend.

Another factor stimulating the interest in this subject and motivating this study is the researcher's parallel career as an entertainer working (or more accurately 'moonlighting') as a comedian for over 40 years. Situations encountered when audience members responded to performances with statements such as 'We all needed a good laugh,' or 'I feel so much better for having laughed so much,' are numerous. Specific instances include working in a region in which government regulation forced the closure of an entire sub-section of an industry sector in Tasmania. This was during the mid-1990s when unemployment in that region was already high and the government decision had left many workers in desperate circumstances. A night of comedy left many of these people expressing their gratitude for being released from the gravity of their current circumstances, albeit briefly. Another more recent experience was a series of charity performances aimed at raising money for the victims of the bushfires which ravaged southern Tasmania in January 2013. Audience members regularly reported that the laughter momentarily helped them forget the tragic circumstances in which they found themselves. Similarly, working with charities such as the Variety Club of Australia and Camp Quality (for children with cancer), the researcher has observed first-hand the apparent benefits of the laughter and joy generated within these audiences. In these circumstances the humour and laughter is greatly appreciated and indeed, expected.

From observations made in his 'day-job' however, the appreciation of the value of humour was not so apparent although many observable benefits were still present. The relevance and potential benefits of humour in the workplace has remained a significant interest and provided much of the motivation for pursuing this study. Humour does not feature strongly in contemporary organisational behaviour literature so by embarking on this study it was hoped that the results may increase an appreciation of humour as a positive influence on workplace culture and encourage a greater use of appropriate humour within workplaces.

At a presentation given in Hobart, Tasmania on 31 October 2006, Dr. Peter Hosie (now Associate Professor, Curtin Business School, Curtin University, Western Australia) discussed the perception that happy employees are more productive. However, Dr. Hosie emphasised that to date there was no empirical evidence to support this perception. He said happy workers seemed to perform better, and when they perform well they feel good about themselves and are therefore happier. He described this as a positive feedback cycle. Dr Hosie said this notion goes back over 70 years and that the time was rife to explore it further. This challenge provided another impetus for the current research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A changing work environment calls for changing human resource management practices

Workplaces in Australia, along with those in other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, have faced changes in recent decades that were unimaginable in the first half of last century. Technological advances have revolutionised communication methods, manufacturing practices, transport options and office processes. These technological changes have also enabled the rapidly increasing globalisation of the world's commerce and industry. During this period there have been other community and societal changes that have impacted on workplaces. Equal opportunity and pay for women, different work /life balance expectations of younger generations entering the workforce and greater cultural diversity characterise some of these changes (Nankervis et al., 2011). Such changes in societal and workplace values and attitudes have been reflected in contemporary human resource management practices which now have a greater focus on the 'softer' aspects of human relations. This now includes consideration being given to employee commitment as well as their capability (Stone, 2008, p.12 and p.350).

To meet the demands of a globally competitive environment, substantial downsizing through redundancy programs have been a constant feature of many OECD countries, including Australia, since the 1980s (Worrall, Campbell and Cooper, 2000; Gandolfi, 2005; Zimmerer, Scarborough and Wilson, 2008; Stone, 2008; Nankervis et al., 2011). Ironically, the consequences for organisations undertaking redundancy programs were not always positive when assessed against organisational and social criteria (Morris, Cascio and Young, 1999).

Management's endeavours to rationalise their workplace staffing structures, as well as accommodating the changing workforce considerations mentioned above, have led to increased demands for greater flexibility from workers and the need for job consolidation, multi-skilling and multi-tasking from a management perspective. There has also been a shift toward organisational out-sourcing of some tasks and a greater emphasis on contract, part-time and temporary employee arrangements. These moves toward increasingly lean and efficient workplaces have resulted in employee insecurity and workplace stresses (Kumar et al., 1999). These in turn become inefficiencies resulting in further organisational losses.

This period of increasing turbulence has resulted in constant changes within organisations and presents new challenges for their survival in the growing competitive global environment in which they now must operate. In an attempt to satisfy the two seemingly contradictory imperatives of creating lean and efficient workplaces and yet attracting and retaining the best employees available, many programs and workplace development interventions have been proposed, trialled and implemented over the past few decades (Powell, 1995). Examples include the 'Just-in-Time' manufacturing techniques, the Total Quality Management (TQM) program, and the 'Balanced Scorecard' but all of these had as their primary focus continuous improvement on processes and an emphasis on resources such as finance, plant, equipment, company data and infrastructure (Nankervis et al., 2011; Kaplan and Norton 1991).

Organisations worked on the assumption that sustained competitive advantage could be assured through maintaining a technological edge and the patent protections and government regulations upon which they relied. They mostly ignored the human resource development that the changing environment was demanding (Morris, Cascio and Young, 1999; Luthans, Luthans and Luthans, 2004).

The response of workplaces to this changing environment led to new pressures on workers which necessitated a different human resource management focus to accommodate the ideology of lean production and maintaining high-performance workplace teams (Kumar et al., 1999). Initially, the organisational investment in 'human capital' had a greater emphasis on developing and maintaining the skills, knowledge and expertise of the workers. This human resource development focus has now extended beyond the job-specific activities and has embraced the broader attributes of a highly functioning worker (Stone, 2008; Nankervis et al., 2011). Also, as younger people joined the workforce, the career development emphasis became one of employability rather than job security (Parker and Inkson, 1999).

There was now an appreciation that organisations were only as good as the people within them and that, if workers felt threatened, bored, undervalued or discouraged they would not be working at their optimum and therefore would not reach their full potential and value to the organisation (Berg, 2001). Many contemporary theories attempting to explain organisational behaviours and motivation, such as that proposed by Berg (2001), are based on the work of Maslow (1954) who developed a five-step hierarchy of needs ranging from lower-order, primarily physiological needs, to higher-order needs such as self-actualisation and personal growth to fulfil one's potential. Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs did not specifically include 'happiness' although the fulfilment of needs listed such as love, belonging and esteem may have an influence on a person's happiness.

A study by Oswald et al., (2014) provided evidence of a link between human happiness and human productivity that suggested more attention needed to be given to emotional well-being as a causal force within workplaces. Considerations such as worker attitudes and values, and

psychological attributes were now accorded a higher prominence in developing human resources in organisations.

The underlying premise of emerging positive psychology theories supported this new approach to human resource development. Positive psychology advocated that, by changing certain psychological attitudes, a transformative effect on a person's life would follow. It suggested that a person's overall well-being relied upon positive emotion together with sound relationships, a sense of accomplishment and having a meaning to one's life (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

As an extension of the traditional discipline of organisational psychology, positive psychology resulted in two organisation-related dimensions being developed. Positive organisational scholarship (POS) examined the positive characteristics of the organisation and positive organisational behaviour (POB) focused on employee attributes (Cameron et al., 2003; Gable and Haidt, 2005; Hosie, Sevastos and Cooper, 2006; Luthans, Youssef and Avolio, 2007). Positive psychological capital (PsyCap), a framework developed to enable further research into positive organisational behaviour, followed. PsyCap is the sum of an individual's psychological attributes of hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience. When observed in high levels, PsyCap was shown to have a positive impact on work performance (Luthans, Youssef and Avolio, 2007; Luthans, Avey, Avolio and Petersen, 2010). Research suggests that PsyCap has a positive correlation with performance and satisfaction, mediates between a supportive organisational climate and employee performance, and supports effective organisational change (Luthans, Avey, Avolio and Petersen, 2010). The view of organisations at the end of last century was that a competitive advantage would only be achieved if the full potential of their human resources could be realised. It was noted that the

optimal use of human resources is harder to replicate by competitors than infrastructure or processes (Barney, 1991; Luthans et al., 2010). The development of PsyCap was stimulated by this observation and proposes that these states of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience, in contrast to dispositional traits, can be developed within individuals and converted into commercial gain within an organisation (Luthans et al., 2007).

Only the above-mentioned attributes of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience were included in the PsyCap model. However, Luthans et al., (2007) also considered other cognitive and affective strengths displayed by individuals. These included creativity, wisdom, well-being, flow and humour.

We believe that today's business environment is in great need of more humour and laughter. Not only is a positive, humorous work environment likely to reduce medical and legal costs, it can also enhance teamwork, foster effective problem solving, promote wider acceptance and tolerance of one-self and others, and encourage challenge-seeking and attaining results. (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 167)

They concluded that humour may be another indicator for possible future inclusion within the PsyCap construct and it was this challenge that became a fundamental premise for this researcher's study.

Around the same time that the PsyCap elements were being more closely examined within a workplace context, leading to the development of the PsyCap construct, another concept was attracting interest from researchers in the field of enhanced workplace performance. This was an emphasis on workplace culture, (Frost et al., 1985). The positive effect that a happy, 'fun' workplace may have on organisational productivity was addressed as an element of workplace culture within specific organisations by Castelli, (1990); Caudron, (1992) and Hudson, (2001). Providing a fun, supportive workplace may attract workers who see their

work as a joy and approach tasks positively. It was proposed that such workers would provide better customer service and would have an abundance of energy and enthusiasm to focus their talents toward the organisation's goals and objectives (Berg, 2001).

One of the many factors contributing to a happy workplace is the encouragement and use of appropriate humour. Until the end of the last century there was little research done in this area as very few organisational scientists, academics and students took the topic seriously, although some notable exceptions to this assertion are detailed in Chapter 2.1. Despite its ubiquity as a desirable human attribute, humour tended to be ignored, or downplayed, as a useful organisational tool (Brief, 1998). Workplace humour attracted criticism as being potentially offensive, counter-productive and a waste of time. Some managers held the view that humorous people could not be taken seriously and that if a worker was being playful he/she could not be taking the work seriously enough to be productive. In undertaking the literature review for this research it was apparent that most of the books, journals and articles written about human emotion tended to focus on 'negative' emotions. By comparison, relatively few considered the more 'positive' emotions and responses such as joy and laughter although material cited by Fineman (2006) shows an escalating number of papers focussing on positivity commencing in the mid-1980s up until the present time.

Perhaps the study of 'laughter' as a phenomenon has been viewed as frivolous because laughter was not viewed as a serious activity. Although pre-dating most of the references cited by Fineman (2006), Morreall, (1983: ix) observed that 'although thousands of books and articles have appeared in our century dealing with human emotions and related phenomena, by far the greater number of these has been concerned with such things as fear and anger and anxiety.' He noted that, by comparison, little had been published about more

positive phenomena such as laughter. As noted by Fineman (2006), there has been a noticeable increase in interest in this topic over the past three decades or so reflected in a commensurate increase in the number and quality of articles available. This is, in part, because of the work and influence of the International Society for Humor Studies (McGraw, 2011). Studies on laughter and humour have moved away from philosophical and literary speculation into scientific journals where psychological, physiological, sociological and psychiatric approaches are applied to the subject (Milner Davis, 2003).

As a result of a growing interest in the potential benefits of humour and laughter, the first International Conference on Humour and Laughter was held in Cardiff, Wales in July 1976. It was sponsored by the British Psychological Society, a body that had taken great interest in reviewing the many papers being written on this topic. These papers included a then relatively recent one from Stanford University Medical School where Dr William Fry, a pioneer in this emerging field, researched the physiological effects of laughter. Fry (1971) demonstrated that laughter, like exercise, initially increases a body's heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen consumption, and exercised the muscles in the face and stomach. He reported that after the laughter subsides, there is a beneficial relaxation response through the easing of muscle tension. Fry became known as the 'father of gelotologie' – the science of laughter.

The impetus for this first conference on humour and laughter was also attributed to Drs Tony Chapman and Hugh Foot from the Welsh Branch of the British Psychological Society. Most of the attendees were English-speaking psychologists and a unifying factor encouraging more interest in the topics of humour and laughter was the 1976 publication of Chapman and Foot's survey *Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications* (Foss, 1977). The

lack of research into humour at that time was considered to be a significant gap in the overall understanding of human psychology. This was especially evident considering the frequency at which humour and laughter was observed in day-to-day human interaction, conversations and behaviours (Chapman and Foot, 1976). The publication of Chapman and Foot's (1976) book, closely followed by the Cardiff International Conference on Humour and Laughter and the subsequent publication of the Cardiff conference proceedings (*It's a Funny Thing, Humour*) in 1977, promoted a much greater interest in humour and laughter as a worthy topic for academic research. As McGhee (1989, p. 4) noted, 'In combination, these events suddenly created the feeling that humour research finally had a future, and that it would soon have a present and a past.'

This first conference, and many of those that followed, had a predominantly psychological focus although there were some papers that investigated the physiological outcomes from humour and laughter such as neurophysiological correlates. The use of humour in workplaces was not specifically addressed. The closest topics discussed at these early conferences with relevance to this researcher's study were those that investigated the use of humour in social structure and group dynamics (Foss, 1977).

With a focus on possible beneficial outcomes for workplaces, this thesis seeks to extend the understanding of PsyCap as a means of improving productivity as well the role, if any, that humour may have in these improvements. The possible inclusion of humour into the PsyCap construct is also explored with the overall framework being one of value to organisations.

1.2 A brief rationale for linking humour with Psychological Capital

The original purpose for undertaking this study was to explore the potential value that humour may have within workplaces. The review of contemporary literature conducted to contextualise this research focus also highlighted the relevance of the PsyCap construct and its positive effect on individuals and workplaces. As mentioned above, Luthans et al., (2007) identified other potential positive indicators that may be favourably considered for a future expansion of PsyCap. Five of these were the cognitive and affective strengths of creativity, wisdom, well-being, flow and humour. Additional indicators identified were gratitude, forgiveness, emotional intelligence, spirituality, authenticity and courage.

With humour already established as a research focus, its acceptability as a PsyCap indicator was an obvious first step. As stipulated by Luthans et al., (2007), to meet the fundamental criteria determined for PsyCap, additional constructs must be positive, theory-based, state-like, measurable, related to work performance and related to other positive outcomes. Not all humour is positive and therefore would not meet the first of these stated criteria. However, the work of Martin et al., (2003) enabled the style of humour being used in workplaces to be identified and assigned into positive and negative categories. This work resulted in the development of an instrument which provided an indication of an individual's preference of humour style being affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive or self-deprecating (see also Chapter 2.3). The current research condenses these four humour styles into two – namely positive or negative humour styles. This is the keystone of the current research – the ability to look specifically at positive humour and to investigate its potential for inclusion as a PsyCap indicator as well as its own beneficial effects within workplaces.

1.3 Organisational value

Introducing PsyCap building strategies into workplaces may result in the development of worker motivation as a practical outcome. Employees with greater capacities of hopefulness, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience are better equipped to ‘ride the storm’ of the uncertainties that face all organisations in the changing context of globalisation (Luthans et al., 2007a). The research conducted by Luthans et al., (2007a) into the respective relationships between PsyCap and work performance, and PsyCap and job satisfaction, showed that a positive relationship did exist between them. PsyCap is also shown to be positively related to desirable workplace attributes such as organisational commitment, and the psychological well-being of the worker, as well as evidence showing PsyCap as being negatively related cynicism, workers’ turnover intentions, and their stress and anxiety levels (Avey et al., 2011). Productivity and financial returns on investment calculations are used by Luthans et al., (2007) to support their claim that the implementation of PsyCap within workplaces is beneficial. However, they also warn of the pitfalls when measuring such outputs and emphasise that further work needs to be done in this field.

Contemporary research demonstrates the positive relationships that exist between PsyCap, organisational outcomes, workplace behaviours and attitudes (Youssef and Luthans, 2012). As the current research has workplace improvement as its primary focus, the inclusion of PsyCap with its demonstrated benefits for workplaces is a sound starting point. The potential inclusion of humour as a PsyCap indicator, and an investigation of other possible benefits that humour may bring to a workplace will follow. Specifically, the two workplace outcomes to be investigated in this research which may be beneficial for organisations, are Work Performance, which relies on each participating individual’s supervisor assessing that worker’s teamwork, creativity, contribution and discretionary effort; and Work Attitude being

a self-report reflection of an individual's job satisfaction, turnover intention (that is, their intention to remain with, or leave, the organisation) and their attachment (affective commitment) to that organisation.

The workers' organisational contributions and their attitude / loyalty towards their job were chosen as accessible indicators which could be collected, grouped and labelled 'work performance' and 'work attitude' for this current research. This decision was influenced by previous workplace-focused research including Warr et al., (1979); Angle and Perry, (1981); Allan and Meyer, (1981); Mowday et al., (1982); Spector (1985); Shore and Martin (1989); Podsakoff, (1990); Brown and Leigh, (1996); Morrison and Phelps, (1999); Rank et al., (2004) and Hosie et al. (2006).

Productivity, and in particular labour productivity, is an essential element of an organisation's success and ongoing sustainability. Productivity formulas exist measuring the connection between the value of organisational output and the cost of inputs including human capital (Dyer and Reeves, 1995). Used in the context of this thesis, the word 'productivity' is a general term covering organisational outcomes of value, across various sectors, with an emphasis on the human capital input part of the productivity equation. In this study the human capital input is determined by Work Performance and Work Attitude.

1.4 Aims of the current research

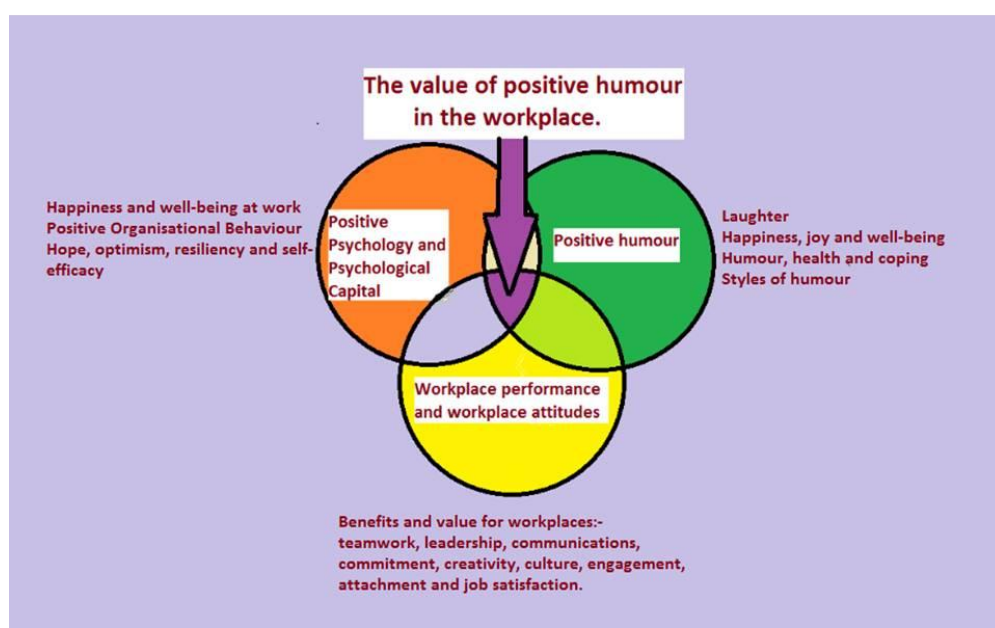
This dissertation explores the use of positive humour as a multifunctional tool that can be used to help achieve many organisational objectives and enhance workplace outcomes. There are various ways of examining the contributions that appropriate humour may make to organisations through leadership; teamwork; workplace culture and climate; worker attitudes

and values; creativity and communication, and the way humour may influence these considerations to increase productivity. As the topic of ‘humour in the workplace’ covers such a broad range of possible benefits that humour could bring to a workplace, the focus of this research was narrowed to an investigation of humour as a potential element in the construct psychological capital (PsyCap) and its impact on two indicators of possible workplace improvement, namely Work Attitudes and Work Performance.

This thesis also explores the effect that the workplace climate and the workplace supervisor’s own sense of humour may have on the relationships between PsyCap, Positive Humour, Work Attitude and Work Performance. The workplace climate examined, specifically relates to whether or not the workplace is viewed as a fun place in which to work at a team level.

Figure 1.1 (below) shows the areas of interest encapsulated by this thesis with the point of intersection being the specific focus for research.

Figure 1.1 Diagrammatic overview of this study



1.5 Thesis structure and chapter content

There are six chapters in the dissertation. This introductory chapter (Chapter 1) provides an overview of the research aims and their significance informed by an interdisciplinary review of the relevant literature. It commences with a discussion of the changing nature of workplaces and introduces two possibilities for helping employees and organisations prosper despite the turbulent times they face. The first of these is humour, the primary interest of the researcher, and the second is PsyCap.

Chapter 2 examines humour as a desirable human attribute and explores and explains associated terminology. This chapter also discusses a confusing factor that may have impeded previous studies; that is, an inability to differentiate between positive and negative humour. For the purposes of this research, humour that may help a workplace in its quest for a happy productive culture and thus be of benefit to that workplace is termed ‘positive humour’ whilst a ‘negative humour’ style may have an opposite and detrimental effect within a workplace. The work of Martin et al., (2003) in examining the individual differences in the use of humour and the subsequent relationship to psychological well-being which led to the development of the Humour Styles Questionnaire is examined. Other instruments designed to measure humour with a variety of outcome emphases are also discussed within this chapter leading to the selection of the Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) also for use in the current research.

Hypotheses relating to the use of humour within organisations and its relationship to work attitudes and work performance are developed from the literature. To determine the moderating effect that a supervisor’s sense of humour may have on these relationships and

the moderating effect that the existence of a ‘fun climate’ within teams may also have, further hypotheses are developed.

The positive psychology movement is then explored in Chapter 3. Positive organisational scholarship (POS), examining positive characteristics at an organisation level, and positive organisational behaviour (POB) focusing more on individual employee attributes, are both explored to enable a meaningful introduction to the construct Psychological Capital (PsyCap) developed by Luthans et al., (2007). The existing literature exploring the relationships between each of the existing PsyCap elements (hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy) and humour is then discussed leading to the development of the first hypothesis – that humour is also an indicator of PsyCap and a strong candidate for future inclusion in the PsyCap construct. Subsequent hypotheses are developed to examine the relationship between PsyCap and its component constructs, and positive humour. Finally, some workplace measures of interest including productivity indicators of teamwork, creativity, contribution and discretionary effort, and workplace attitude indicators of job satisfaction, intention to stay (turnover) and organisational commitment are discussed. The relationships of these workplace attributes to PsyCap are then examined leading into the remaining hypotheses to be tested.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe the research methodology and the results respectively. The process of collecting data is described outlining the distribution, collection, confidentiality and ethics considerations. Survey forms were used for data collection with most of the information being sourced through self-reports. The exception to this was the workplace performance indicators which were reported upon by each individual participant’s supervisor. These chapters also include the initial Confirmatory Factor Analysis to determine the suitability of

humour as a PsyCap construct indicator and the testing of the hypotheses developed in Chapters 2 and 3. A series of regression analyses are performed to determine the relationships between variables of interest. The moderating effect on these relationships of a supervisor's sense of humour and the 'fun climate' that may exist within teams is also tested. To achieve the latter investigation into the moderating effect of a 'fun climate', there is also a need to conduct an inter-team rating consistency analysis when exploring the culture of each work team surveyed.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 6, revisits the research aims and discusses the implications of the research findings, especially for workplaces. It also addresses the limitations of this current research and explores opportunities for future research on this topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

HUMOUR

from an historical perspective to a contemporary understanding of its use and benefits

Humour is by far the most significant activity of the human brain. Edward De Bono

This chapter initially examines the way humour has been considered historically leading up to contemporary academic research. It also looks at the need for an instrument to categorise humour into that which may be helpful and that which may be detrimental to relationships. This need led to the development of the Humour Styles Questionnaire by Martin et al. (2003) which was used in this research and is discussed in this chapter. The interdisciplinary review of the literature will continue in the next chapter focusing on how humour might fit within the paradigm of Positive Organisational Behaviour and in particular its key construct of PsyCap. Where relevant, the relationships between these two fields of research and work attitudes and work performance as outcomes are highlighted.

The principal topics discussed in this chapter are humour, a history of humour study, definitions used, humour styles and the possible benefits of workplace humour as they relate to work attitude and performance. The benefits of promoting a ‘fun climate’ within workplaces are also addressed as is the use of humour by leaders. The sections of the chapter covering humour in relation to work attitudes and performance, fun climates and leaders’ use of humour provide a basis for the development of hypotheses. The chapter concludes by

introducing Positive Organisational Behaviour, leading into Chapter 3 and the development of subsequent hypotheses to be tested in this research.

2.1 Humour – an overview

Humour is a universal trait that has existed in every culture and throughout history, transcending language, geography and time (MacHovec, 2012). Despite its ubiquity as a desirable human attribute, humour tended to be ignored or downplayed by organisational scientists and, until the late 1980s, comparatively little research had been done to explore humour's purpose in the overall realm of human experience (Brief, 1998; Chapman and Foot, 2007). Some notable exceptions to this assertion include Roy (1959) who, in studying boredom among employees in organisations, became aware of rituals among small groups of workers that included joking and bantering. He concluded that worker boredom and fatigue was alleviated by this 'horse play'. Collinson (1988) also explored humour was a way of coping with workplace boredom. He quoted one worker as saying, 'Some days it feels like a fortnight. A few years ago I got into a rut. I had to stop myself from getting bored so I increased the number of pranks at work' (Collinson, 1988; p. 185).

Humour was also recorded as a prevalent method of expressing latent hostility toward others within workgroups because 'people find it less risky to couch hostility within jokes, pranks, and other humorous media than to express it directly' (Kahn, 1989, p. 52 and also Roy, 1959, p. 165). The use of humour also shown to help maintain an organisation's culture and shared identity (Kahn, 1989, p.53). Other early contributions on the pervasiveness and relevance of humour and irony within organisations were made by Duncan and Feisal, (1989) and Infante and Gordon, (1989) – see Section 2.4.

2.1.1 A history of humour study and research

Humour has been a source of fascination for people throughout history. Many theories of humour and laughter have been postulated by philosophers over the past two millennia commencing with Plato (428 – 348 B.C.) who saw humour as being one's amusement towards relatively powerless people in a malicious manner. Morreall (1987) provides a chronology of the traditional theories of laughter and humour with the underlying philosophies of each theory. Following Plato, philosophers including Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Hobbes, Rene Descartes, Francis Hutcheson, David Harley, Immanuel Kant, George Santayana and Henri Bergson, as well as psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud are amongst those adding their theories to the debate (Morreall, 1987). More contemporary theories of humour have subsequently evolved over the past few decades including those reported by Ziv (1984), Fry (1994), Ruch (1998), Lefcourt (2001), Martin (2007) and McGhee (2010).

2.1.2 Research focussing on laughter

A study of humour would be incomplete without examining the physical manifestation of a humorous verbal exchange or activity; that is, laughter. Theories as to why humans laugh have moved over time from a recognition that laughter can be either exuberantly pleasurable or malicious, to being primarily social and, as Freud posited, being cathartic in helping relieve pent-up stresses (Provine, 2000). The complex character of laughter serves many attitudes with no single human feeling being laughter's unique stimulus (Gregory, 1924). However, laughter is the quintessential human social signal having more to do with forming friendships than responding to jokes and humour (Provine, 2000). Provine's research concluded that people laugh 30 times more when they are around other people than when they are alone, supporting the view that laughter is indicative of positive human relationships and interactivity. Laughter may have evolved as a communicative signal between humans

and groups of humans, indicating that everything is calm, safe and ‘normal’, and that there is, at this moment in time, an absence of danger. Accepting this evolutionary theory, the main purpose of laughter is to alert others within the group that a perceived anomaly is of little consequence or has insignificant harm potential (Ramachandran, 1998).

The three traditional theories of laughter most commonly used are the ‘incongruity theory’, the ‘superiority theory’, and the ‘relief theory’ (Morreall, 1983). The ‘incongruity theory’ suggests that humans will laugh when events do not fit neatly within expected patterns.

French philosopher Blaise Pascal is quoted by Ludovici (1933: 27) as saying, ‘Nothing produces laughter more than a surprising disproportion between that which one expects and that which one sees.’ The basis of most jokes is incongruity. A joke is told in the form of a story to which there may be a rational conclusion. However this conclusion is not reached.

The story takes an unexpected twist or turn at the end which offers the listener an unexpected (odd, strange or even abnormal) ending. The surprise of the incongruous conclusion, the ‘punch line’, causes laughter (Morreall, 1997).

Bergson (1911) also calls attention to the incongruity theory of laughter which suggests that humans respond with laughter when there is a distinct difference between that which is expected and that which one sees. According to Bergson, what makes something laughable is somehow an ‘offense’ to human expectations of social norms and ideals. He also notes that laughter is a ‘cerebral’ activity requiring a detached attitude and an emotional distance from the object of the laughter, and that it has a ‘social function’.

To understand laughter, we must put it back into its natural environment, which is society, and above all must we determine the utility of its function, which is a social one. Such, let us say at once, will be the leading idea of all

our investigations. Laughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a social signification. (Bergson, 1911, p. 12.)

Although laughter is usually a sign of friendliness and congeniality, there are exceptions wherein laughter is used as a form of ridicule. This forms the basis of the ‘superiority theory’, the oldest and possibly still the most accepted theory of laughter (Ludovici, 1933; Morreall, 1983; Martin, 2007). It suggests that laughter is an expression of one person’s perceived ‘superiority’ over another. This theory gives rise to the expression to ‘laugh at someone’. Morreall (1983, p.4) quotes Plato as saying that such laughter is a ‘pain in the soul’ because in order to laugh at someone, the laughter contains a degree of malice and malice is usually harmful. This theory acknowledges that laughter may sometimes express derision and is the antithesis of the current research which focuses on positive humour (laughing with people) rather than negative humour (laughing at people) in a derisive manner. This ‘malicious intent’ was identified by early philosophers such as Plato as a basis for their theories on laughter (Provine, 2000). Ruch (2008, p. 34) reports that a ‘bad mood might also be a disposition facilitating certain forms of humor, such as mockery, irony, cynicism, and sarcasm.’

Deriding a person through laughing to scorn, ridicule or mock them, that is using laughter with malicious intent, is not conducive to good, healthy relationships. In a workplace, such laughter would impede positive productivity factors such as teamwork, support and job satisfaction (Martin, 2007; Morrison, 2012). The laughter that results from malicious, ridiculing activities does not have the beneficial qualities of positive, inclusive humour. Such laughter and its stimuli or sources are not explored further in this study.

The third theory, the ‘relief theory of laughter’ (also called the ‘tension-relief theory’), addresses a question that the previous two theories do not adequately explain; that is, why does laughter take the physical form it does, and what is its biological function? The relief theory suggests that laughter is used to break free of a constraint (Gregory, 1924; Morreall, 1983; Martin, 2007). Gregory (1924, p. 179) suggests that ‘Laughter turns relief to greater profit. It turns a diverted action into a pleasant gymnastic and makes the body glow.’ The laughter interrupts an action that was causing tension resulting in a sense of heightened vitality. People experience a reduction in stress levels through humour and laughter, according to the relief theory. This may take the form of lowered anxiety levels or a release of physical tension (Kuiper et al., 1993). Aligning closely with this theory are the physiological benefits of laughter. Laughter has been shown to reduce the symptoms of the many adverse health conditions reputedly exacerbated by stress (Fry, 1992; McGhee, 2010; Morrison, 2012.)

Closely related to the relief theory of laughter is the use of humour as a way of coping in times of adversity such as war, civil tragedies and terrorist attacks (Bizi, Keinan, and Beit-Hallahmi, 1988; Wooten and Dunkelblau, 2001; Henman, 2001). Freud (1905) labeled the humour used in the face of adversity, ‘gallows humour’ although today it is often referred to as ‘black humour’. War-time biographies and newspaper reports contain many examples of humour being used effectively as a coping measure. A small sample of these is reported in Appendix 2. The anecdotal evidence contained in these books and newspaper articles are complemented by supportive academic studies. For example, the humour used by emergency workers within the Queensland State Emergency Service, primarily as a mechanism for coping with the daily stresses of their work, was reported by Moran and Massam (1997).

Almost a century after the publication of Bergson's philosophy in 1911, Critchley (2002) reiterated the three theories of laughter, namely the superiority theory, the incongruity theory and the relief theory, although he stated that there are many explanations for laughter and humour. Expanding on these theories through philosophical analysis, Critchley (2002) suggested that humour also has redeeming features. Humour can be consoling rather than aggressive and it can enable a person to laugh at oneself rather than at others. Critchley (2002, p. 62) comments that humour is 'philosophizing in action' and, (on p. 102), is 'a profoundly cognitive relation to oneself and the world'. He suggests that humour involves an essential relationship between oneself and one's body and the social environment in which we exist. He also makes that point that humour is culture-specific and is a relatively modern notion which blossomed in the eighteenth century.

These three theories of laughter have evolved over centuries but have lacked the empirical evidence expected of today's research. In an attempt to rectify this, Provine (2000) used a 'naturalistic, descriptive tactic' to examine the stimuli and instinctive roots for laughter. Amongst his conclusions was the need for at least two people to be involved in an exchange for laughter to flow. That is, there must be a speaker and an audience of at least one other. The exception is when a person is alone but watching, or listening to, humorous material in which case the communicating device (radio, television etc.) assumes the role of the first person in the dyad. Provine (2000, p.42) also concluded that 'most laughter is not a response to jokes or other formal attempts at humor' but that it is organic and implicit in the exchange between the parties. That is, laughter can occur in the absence of humour and conversely, humour is not always accompanied by laughter (Lefcourt and Martin, 1986).

In an organisational context, humour may not always be beneficial but its value in human resource development has now been recognised. Within contemporary management practices, humour and laughter, once perceived as detrimental to organisational effectiveness, is now being viewed as a potential positive organisational attribute (Barsoux, 1996). Humour is an effective way to promote a healthy work life and improved workplace harmony, and is an effective form of communication, cutting across hierarchical boundaries by being multidirectional throughout the organisation and usually faster than formal communication channels. A good indicator of an organisation's culture is the shared workplace humour and joking patterns; and corporate values and assumptions may be reflected through workplace humour enabling different insights into the nature of the organisation (Barsoux, 1996).

An early study examining the social function of humour was Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) exploration of the use of humour within African tribes in which he stated that the joking relationship he observed was a peculiar mix of friendliness and antagonism. He concludes that all social humour, particularly workplace humour, functions ultimately as control and resistance. When resistance humour is used, it acts like a safety valve and releases built-up tensions. Further discussion on workplace humour can be found in Chapter 2.4.

The peculiar human expression of laughter arises from a variety of situations or stimuli that have little in common thus making the identification of an underlying principle extremely difficult if not impossible. It may be triggered by a pleasant surprise; being told an amusing story, anecdote or joke; or observing an incident or pictorial representation of something that leads to amusement. There are seven primary causes of laughter; namely humorous, social, ignorance, anxiety, derision, apologetic and tickling (Giles and Oxford, 1970). Laughter may

be caused by various non-humorous stimuli such as embarrassment, laughing gas (nitrous oxide), and can be triggered by other peoples' laughter (Attardo, 2008).

Yet another source of laughter is 'laughter yoga'. Laughter yoga was developed by an Indian physician Dr. Madan Kataria who started the first 'laughter club' in 1995 with just five people. Today, laughter yoga has become a worldwide phenomenon with more than 6000 social laughter clubs in 60 countries. Laughter yoga combines laughter with yogic breathing but the laughter does not rely on humour, jokes or comedy for its stimulus. The theory behind laughter yoga is based on a perception that the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter. It assumes that the participant will enjoy the same physiological and psychological benefits as they would if they were experiencing 'genuine', spontaneous laughter (Kataria, 2002; Morrison, 2012).

Humour in the form of an amusing story, image or situation as noted above, is therefore only one of the many stimuli that may lead to laughter. It is this humour that remains the focus of the current research. Nilsen and Nilsen (2000) extend the theories about laughter to include smiling which they differentiate by suggesting that laughter is basically a public event while smiling is more private. They note that because smiles may sometimes develop into laughter and also that laughs can taper off into smiles, some people may assume that laughter is merely a heightened form of smiling. However, they argue that smiles are more likely to express feelings such as satisfaction or good will whilst laughter can occur in response to a surprise or the recognition of an incongruity.

2.1.3 Humour and health

Possibly the greatest volume of research conducted into the value and role of humour to date, has been in its reputed relationship to the field of physiological health. McCreddie and Wiggins (2009) discuss humour-based health benefits, as identified by other scholars, and explain the direct and indirect benefits of these. There appears to be two divided bodies of opinion – those who state that there is strong evidence supporting the theory that humour and laughter have some beneficial physiological properties, and those who feel that much more work needs to be done before accepting this premise.

The proposal that laughter may produce helpful changes in the endocrine or immune systems, and also that positive emotional states may accompany laughter, are examples of direct humour-based health benefits. An indirect benefit is that laughter may moderate the adverse effects of stress, or that it may also increase a person's level of social support. These observations are qualified by noting that the debate continues over evidence of correlations between humour/laughter and direct health benefits (Martin and Lefcourt, 2004). Despite this ongoing debate, the positive interaction between humour and medicine appears to have been recognised by physicians for hundreds of years. Wooten (1996, p.50) quotes a 14th century professor of surgery, Henri de Mondeville, who wrote, 'Let the surgeon take care to regulate the whole regime of the patient's life for joy and happiness, allowing his relatives and special friends to cheer him, and by having someone tell him jokes.'

Stress causes the adrenal glands to release cortico steroids, high levels of which have an immunosuppressive effect. Prolonged stress creates unhealthy physiological changes for which laughter is suggested as an antidote. Laughter is believed to not only boost the immune system, but also decreases significant stress hormones such as cortisol (Berk, Tan,

Fry et al., 1989). Popular non-academic texts such as Cousins (1979) and Adams (1998) support these theories reporting their own practical experiences, and promote the philosophy that good health is based on happiness.

A contrary view is that such findings about humour and health are inconclusive, although the mind can have an influence on the body and some of laughter's benefits might be attributable to a placebo effect. A direct relationship between overt laughter and changes in pain tolerance has not been established, so it remains unclear as to whether the positive effects reported by Cousins and Adams are due to the actual laughter itself, or due to the resultant positive emotions that may exist following the laughter (Martin, 2001).

Despite Martin's assertion that there is still more work to be done before a definitive and absolute link may be made between humour and physical well-being, there does appear to be enough evidence to suggest some benefits. For example, he concedes that laughter may have beneficial effects on health even if there is no humour stimulus for that laughter, citing the previously discussed work of Dr. Madan Kataria and yogic laughter (or laughter yoga) as an example.

2.1.4 Humour and stress

Humour is one way humans have historically coped with stress. It has been a useful characteristic in the evolution of the species allowing us to cope with otherwise unbearable circumstances and enabling humans to cluster together for mutual and collective benefits (Lefcourt, 2001). From a functionalist psychological perspective Lefcourt suggests that there is a crucial difference between humour that is beneficial to a group and 'hostile' humour which has a predominantly splintering effect on members of a group rather than being

cohesive. This observation is significant given the focus of differentiated positive and negative humour in this thesis.

Others to conclude that positive humour has a beneficial effect on stress levels include Abel (2002) and Kuiper et al. (1993). A reduction of anxiety levels and an increase in positive moods and emotional response follows the use of humour (Abel and Maxwell, 2002). This is also a significant observation given the discussion on happiness, wellbeing and positivity to follow in Chapter 3.

Lower levels of burnout in stressful occupations where humour use was prevalent, were reported by Killian (2005) and a higher level of psychological well-being through humour was included in the findings of Fry (1995) and Sanders (2004). In this latter study, Sanders (2004) examined the use of humour by British sex workers and described the way humour contributed to the range of defence mechanisms prostitutes use to cope with their 'extreme' profession.

Life generally, and workplaces in particular, can be extremely stressful and strategies for coping with stress and antidotes to stress are needed. Short-term, quick-fix solutions for stress management are inadequate. Longer-term strategies are needed involving preventative stress management and workplace culture changes (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987). In addition, where stressors are inevitable, it would be helpful for organisations to encourage their employees to develop the skills necessary to cope with those stressors (Jex and Bliese, 1999).

As mentioned in the discussion about the ‘relief theory of laughter’ (Chapter 2.1.2. above), the use of appropriate humour can play an important role in coping with stress (Berk et al., 1989; Dixon, 1994; Gavin and Mason, 2004). Laughter may moderate the adverse effects of stress and may also increase a person’s level of social support, suggesting that the social support element may be the key when it comes to fighting stress and staying happy. The role of humour in this scenario may be cyclic. A positive sense of humour appears to make a person more approachable and likeable. This in turn helps them build and maintain a nurturing social network resulting in increased social interaction that helps generate more humour (Martin, 2004). This is a ‘positive feedback’ loop wherein the output of an action is fed back into the input of that action thus amplifying the resultant output.

Humour is an effective self-care option. Tensions can be reduced through recognising the humour in a situation and having an ability to find something delightful in a current circumstance. To experience joy and laughter, especially if it is with others, will reduce tensions and can be a significant antidote to stress (Lefcourt and Martin, 1986). A sense of humour may moderate stress as, by an individual taking a humorous perspective on an otherwise stressful situation, it may enable that person to make a positive reappraisal of the circumstance and use this as a coping strategy (Martin, 2001).

2.1.5 A clarification of definitions

From the descriptions presented immediately above it is apparent that there are specific words that relate to, and are often used when discussing, the effects of humour. In the previous paragraph, words such as ‘delightful’, ‘joy’ and ‘laughter’ are used to convey actions and emotions that may flow from humour. Due to the inter-changeability of these

words it is considered necessary to clarify some definitions leading to the specific definition of 'humour' to be used in the specific context in which it is used in this research.

The word *humour* has many meanings in contemporary use. It derives from the Latin word *umor* which means liquid or fluid. Early uses of the word referred to the fluid energy which was believed to flow through the human body influencing an emotional state. These fluids were generally identified as blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy although Ruch (1998) records them as blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. It was also believed that this energy determined one's health and disposition. Some reference to this belief exists today in commonly used expressions such as 'he is in good humour'. As theories of humour have evolved, so too has its definition. Milner Davis (2003, p. 39) discusses the etymology of the word 'humour' and concludes that its use is now so broad as to 'embrace all branches of study of what might previously have been called 'the comic' or 'the laughable', that is, the essence and nature of things which by accident or design tend to make people laugh or be considered funny.'

Many of the previous studies in this field which were examined as part of the current research used differing terminologies. Related words for 'humour' were frequently encountered. These words include 'fun', 'mirth', 'play' and 'playfulness'. Similarly inconsistent use of words such as 'happiness', 'joy' and 'well-being', when referring to workplaces, has also led to some confusion in the past. These emotions and feelings contribute to organisational positivity and are discussed further in Chapter 3.

2.1.6 The definition of humour used in the current research

Humour is a multifaceted phenomenon that does not easily lend itself to a single generalised definition (Cooper, 2005; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). Psychologists define humour as normal verbal communication (Cooper, 2005) in which the sender and a receiver encode and decode the communication respectively through a mutually agreed and understood process (Avolio, Howell, and Sosik, 1999). This communication is intended to amuse the receiver (the ‘target’) and that target understands that the humorous communication is an intentional act (Cooper, 2005).

Humour can also be used to describe a stimulus (for example, a staged comedy); a mental process whereby a human perceives or creates incongruities; or a response such as laughter or exhilaration. It is initiated by a stimulus such as a joke or cartoon that terminates with a response indicative of experienced pleasure such as laughter (Martin, 2000; Chapman, 2007). Humour can also be viewed as that innate human capacity to perceive experiences differently, for example by reframing an event that has resulted in a loss then looking at this event as a positive learning experience. This ability is often referred to colloquially as ‘seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses’ or ‘viewing a cup as being half-full rather than half-empty’. It is this capacity to change our perception of events that allows humans to experience joy, even in adverse circumstances (Wooten, 1996). This explanation of humour is most pertinent to the specific consideration of humour as a coping mechanism. Some anecdotal examples of this use of humour are recorded in Appendix 2.

A humorous interaction usually involves one person generating and communicating the humorous material and always one or more people being recipients. For the humour to be affective those receiving it must have a ‘sense of humour’; that is the capacity of perceiving

such humour and enjoying that which is humorous, amusing or even ludicrous. After considering definitions by Martineau (1972) and Crawford (1994), Romero and Cruthirds (2006, p.59) proposed that organisational humour be defined as ‘amusing communications that produce positive emotions in the individual, group or organization.’ From a sociological and psychological perspective, this definition is not strictly correct in that it cannot be claimed that groups or organisations have a singular ‘positive emotion’. Groups and organisations are not a singular entity but a collection of individuals. It is the positive emotions produced by the ‘amusing communication’ within the individuals comprising the group or organisation that is the actual basis of the preferred definition.

The Romero and Cruthirds (2006) definition is preferred for the purposes of this thesis because of its specific relevance to a workplace environment being a ‘group or organization’, even after considering the earlier clarification that it is the individuals who experience positive emotions from organisational humour and these individuals, in turn, make up the referred-to groups and organisations. This definition also specifies ‘positive emotions’ as an outcome which is most relevant to the current research given its focus on positive psychology, positive emotions and positive organisational outcomes. The Romero and Cruthirds definition however, does not address the view that negative reactions may arise from inappropriate humour use between individuals, or within groups and organisations. For the humour to produce ‘positive emotions’, one could conclude that the humour to which the Romero and Cruthirds definition refers, is actually ‘positive humour’.

The definitions proposed by Martineau (1972) and Crawford (1994) which were considered by Romero and Cruthirds (2006) when forming their own definition, embraced verbal or non-

verbal communication between people which was mutually perceived as humorous and produced a positive response from the listener.

The ‘humour’ considered in this thesis is communication which has a quality of being comical or laughable, and produces positive emotions within people that is manifested by a physical response of laughter, smiling or generally ‘feeling good’. As the intent of this thesis is to exclusively consider ‘positive humour’, the Romero and Cruthirds definition will be assumed to be referring exclusively to positive humour. The refined definition of humour used throughout this thesis therefore, is: *Positive humour is amusing communications that produce positive emotions within individuals*. Positive organisational humour occurs when these individuals belong to an organisation and the amusing communication occurs in that context.

2.2 Operationalising humour in academic research

Billions of dollars are spent annually in the entertainment sector rewarding people who have the talent and capacity to make others laugh. In addition, great numbers of playwrights, novelists, film-makers, animators and cartoonists earn a comfortable living by creating humorous material. Despite this there appears to be little academic study of, or research conducted into, humour and its physical manifestation of laughter (Chapman and Foot, 2007). This is despite the positive potentials of humour, including its therapeutic benefits, being reported by Moody (1978), Fry (1994) and McGhee, (1999).

Because humour is an abstract concept in empirical research, it first must be translated into other variables enabling analysis to occur using these measurable variables. The process of defining the measurement of humour, as indicated by other phenomena, is termed ‘operationising’. Research that had been conducted into the phenomena of humour has been operationalised using variables such as humour preferences and has resulted in the development of validated self-report instruments. Some of those in common use until the introduction of the HSQ by Martin et al. (2003) were examined in this research. These, together with the specific measures being employed in the current research, are detailed in Table 2.1 below.

The commonly used instruments detailed in Table 2.1 generally focused on a specific aspect of humour and its uses; for example, as a coping mechanism, a method of stress release, humour appreciation or the use of laughter as a behavioural response. As noted in the table below, Martin and Lefcourt (1984) developed a humour response questionnaire that examined various situations in which humour is used. This instrument, the Situational Humour Response Questionnaire (SHRQ), measured the tendency of the individual to be amused and laugh easily in diverse situations but was limited in that it did not adequately cover all the elements that seemed to comprise a sense of humour (Thorson and Powell, 1993). To address this, Thorson and Powell developed and validated a self-report instrument, the Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) to evaluate a person’s sense of humour given all the elements they considered necessary. These individual elements that constitute a ‘sense of humour’ include humour production; an ability to be humorous; the ability to identify funny things in a given situation; to be able to create and relate that which amuses others; having a sense of playfulness or whimsy; an ability to have a good time and be ‘good-natured’; the ability to use humour to achieve certain social goals; using humour as

a ‘social lubricant’, that is to ease one’s involvement within a group; using humour as a means of alleviating tense situations; using humour to enforce social norms and enhance group solidarity; having a personal recognition of life’s absurdities and of one-self as humorous; having an appreciation of humour and humorous people and situations; and an ability to use humour as an adaptive mechanism – being able to laugh at problems and to overcome difficulties through using humour (Thorson and Powell, 1991 and 1993; Martin, 2007; Morrison, 2012).

The Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) developed by Thorson and Powell (1993) sought to overcome the restrictive effects of the existing humour instruments. These instruments are listed in Table 2.1 below. Two additional instruments developed after the MSHS are also shown including the Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ) which is pivotal to the current research. The MSHS is not a test of whether or not an individual ‘gets’ the joke, but from the answers provided it assesses the behaviours relative to the humour and attitudes toward that humour that are preferred by the participant (Thorson et al., 1997). The overall scores for most uses of the MSHS were reported as generally gender neutral (Thorson and Powell, 1993). This observation that was noted given the use of this instrument in the current study in which the male to female ratio of supervisors surveyed is approximately equal; a ratio of 24:21 for the 45 teams that ultimately used the MSHS instrument. The MSHS is used in the current research to measure the sense of humour for each supervisor of the participating work teams. The resultant scores were used to determine whether or not supervisors’ sense of humour had a moderating effect on the relationship between positive humour and workplace attitude, and positive humour and workplace performance.

Table 2.1- A list of instruments for measuring specific aspects of humour

Instrument name	Author	Measure
IPAT Humour Test	Cattell and Tollefson (1966)	This is a self-assessment instrument measuring different personality characteristics associated with humour preferences. It measures humour-related characteristics across 13 dimensions; for example introversion / extraversion; dry wit / good-natured play; flirtatious playfulness / gruesomeness; and urbane pleasantness / hostile degradation.
Sense of Humour Questionnaire (SHQ) and SHQ-6	Svebak (1974 and 1996)	This is a self-report instrument useful for investigating relationships between sense of humour and other personality attributes, as well as measures of psychological and physical health and well-being. The original SHQ was revised by its author in 1996 to remove some items due to low reliabilities.
Coping Humour Scale (CHS)	Martin and Lefcourt (1983)	The Coping Humour Style instrument was used in research on the use of humour in coping with stress and the association between sense of humour and both mental and physical health.
Situational Humour Response Questionnaire (SHRQ)	Martin and Lefcourt (1984)	The SHRQ measures the degree to which individuals tend to be amused and to laugh easily in a wide range of situations. This instrument has been used in research on sense of humour as a stress-moderator and the association between sense of humour and both mental and physical health.

Antioch Sense of Humor Inventory	Mindess et al. (1985)	Measures the appreciation for 10 humour types - namely nonsense, philosophical, social, sexual, hostile, ethnic, sick, scatological, male-demeaning and female-demeaning humour. This instrument assesses humour preferences as they relate to personality characteristics.
3 WD Humor Test	Ruch (1992)	A humour appreciation test measuring six scales for the funniness and aversiveness of three types of humour – namely incongruity-resolution, nonsense and sexual humour.
Humour Cognition Test	Feingold and Mazella (1993)	Assesses humour knowledge and reasoning skills as part of multi-dimensional model of humour creativity involving motivation, cognition and communication. The measure provides a single humour cognition score with sub-scores for knowledge and reasoning.
Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) *	Thorson and Powell (1993)	<p>The MSHS produces an overall Sense of Humour score and also provides an individual factor analysis for each of the four principal factors being measured, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - humour creativity and uses of humour for social purposes; - uses of coping humour; - appreciation of humorous people; and appreciation of humour. <p>This instrument is useful for comparing individuals and groups on their sense of humour and also for determining correlates between a sense of humour and other personality variables. The MSHS was used in this current research to measure the sense of humour of participating work-teams supervisors to ascertain whether or not this factor had a moderating effect on other outcomes.</p>

Sense of Humour Scale	McGhee (1999)	<p>The SHS measures eight areas of humour-related behaviours and provides an overall Humour Quotient. The eight areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enjoyment of humour, Seriousness/negative mood, Playfulness/positive mood, - laughter, - verbal humour, - finding humour in everyday life - laughing at yourself, and - humour under stress. <p>This instrument is designed for use with a humour development training program in which participants complete the SHS both before and after the program to assess changes that may have occurred as a result of the training.</p>
Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ) *	Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir, (2003)	<p>This instrument differentiates between and measures four humour styles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - affiliative (use of humour to amuse others and facilitate relationships); - self-enhancing (use of humour to cope with stress and maintain a humorous outlook during times of difficulty); - aggressive (use of sarcastic, manipulative, put-down, or disparaging humour); - self-defeating (use of humour for excessive self-disparagement, ingratiation, or defensive denial) <p>The HSQ is used for assessing both positive and negative styles of humour in correlational research and was selected for this current research as the positive / negative differentiation is fundamental to the hypotheses being tested.</p>

NOTE: * denotes instruments used in the current research.

2.3 Adaptive humour styles

This chapter examines the history of the understanding of humour culminating in the work of Martin et al., (2003). An understanding of previous research was necessary as a basis on which to build a new investigation into the effects of humour in contemporary workplaces. Until Martin et al. developed the Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ) research into relationships between humour and workplaces were hampered by a lack of clarity as to whether the ‘humour’ being used to assess these relationships was positive or negative. Martin et al.’s HSQ determined a method of separating positive, affiliative humour from that which is derogatory and mostly negative. It was apparent that previous studies focussing on humour were often compromised because of an acknowledgement that not all ‘humour’ is beneficial (Martin et al., 2003; Luthans et al. 2007). Although the terms ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ were not initially used when describing humour styles, this study will use these terms to generally differentiate between humour that may be beneficial and therefore is to be encouraged or nurtured in a workplace, and that which is counterproductive and needs limiting within, or eliminating from, a work environment. Other descriptors used to describe the humour styles, are ‘healthy and unhealthy’ and ‘adaptive and maladaptive’ dimensions of humour (Martin et al. 2003).

2.3.1 A differentiation of humour styles

To ensure there is no ambiguity about the style of humour being specifically examined in this study, ‘positive humour’ is to be regarded as humour that is inclusive and uplifting, and that satisfy definitions of the styles identified and labelled by Martin et al. (2003) as ‘affiliative’ and ‘self-enhancing’. This style of humour does not target or attack others, nor does it marginalise them. It is humour that can make light of a situation or even some behaviours

without another person feeling compromised. This is popularly described as using humour to lift people up – not put them down.

The opposite of positive humour – negative humour – is generally used to the detriment of others. It is statements or actions purported to be ‘funny’ that attacks or excludes another person. Much of the dialogue delivered by the character David Brent (played by comedian Ricky Gervais) in the popular BBC comedy *The Office* which debuted on BBC 2 in July 2001 fits into this latter humour style.

It is acknowledged that not everybody views humour styles in the same way. Personal taste plays a crucial part in humour appreciation, and these tastes may change over time, even within short periods of time as moods change (Ross, 1998). Different responses to certain attempts at humour are also possible through misunderstandings, ambiguity, language differences or the lack of a common understanding of basic concepts upon which the humour is based. Irony is particularly vulnerable to misunderstanding (Ross, 1998).

A common mistake made when trying to find universality in theories of humour and laughter is the expectation that an ‘ontology of humour’ exists – that is, that humour and laughter can easily cross all boundaries including cultural, generational and gender etc. This is clearly impractical. However, the Humour Styles Questionnaire developed by Martin et al. (2003) has been used extensively in North America, Europe and Asia including versions being translated into other languages (Penzo et al., 2011; Falanga, 2014). It was therefore determined that this instrument, although not perfect, would at least provide a useful indication of humour style preferences displayed by the Australian workplace participants in this current research,

The emphasis on positive humour in this current study aligns with the emphasis of PsyCap (to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3) which has its genesis in positive psychology, popularly called the ‘science of happiness’, and focuses purely on positivity. Negative humour lies outside the gamut of positive psychology considerations and is therefore not considered within the context of this current study.

A sense of humour is a ‘multi-faceted construct’, not a single dimension, best viewed as a class of loosely related traits despite the fact that humour is sometimes referred to as a stable personality trait. Therefore, these differing identifiable facets of a sense of humour should be the subject of different approaches to their measurement (Martin et al., 2003). The ‘weak’ research findings that have emerged when examining the impact of humour in various measures in research projects to date may have been due to the method of measuring the humour element in these research projects.

The problem as stated by Martin et al. (2003) is that self-report humour measures in use do not explicitly distinguish between two disparate styles; humour which has potentially adaptive functions and uses of humour that may be less conducive and possibly even detrimental to our well-being.

This perceived deficiency was addressed through the development and initial validation of the Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ); a multi-dimensional measure which assesses four different dimensions that reflect the common uses and functions of humour in contemporary everyday life (Martin et al., 2003).

The four styles of humour identified are:

- affiliative humour (in which one laughs and jokes with friends and colleagues)
- aggressive humour (in which one laughs and jokes at the expense of others – usually in an attempt to belittle or demean them)
- self-enhancing humour (in which one attempts to cheer oneself with uplifting self-focused humour to help change perspective or counter stressors)
- self-defeating humour (in which one uses negative self-directed humour at one's own expense, or allows or encourages others to use negative humour toward them at their expense).

Affiliative and self enhancing humour styles are described as being relatively healthy or adaptive, whilst aggressive and self-defeating humour styles are relatively unhealthy or maladaptive and potentially detrimental (Martin et al., 2003). This thesis labels the two style groupings as 'positive' and 'negative' respectively, to align with the emphasis on positivity promoted through Positive Psychology which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

2.4 Humour in the workplace

Throughout the history of humour studies, few organisational scientists, academics or students have taken humour in a workplace context seriously until relatively recently. A brief history of humour studies and research is presented earlier in this chapter, specifically in sections 2.1 and 2.1.2, and it is obvious from the comparative recency of most of the references cited that this is a growing field of interest and research. Workplace humour usually attracted criticism as potentially being offensive, counter-productive and a waste of time. Some organisations held the view that humorous people could not be taken seriously

and that if a worker was being playful he/she could not be taking the work seriously enough to actually be productive (Brief, 1998). It was found that inappropriate humour, especially if used by managers, could have a detrimental effect on employee job satisfaction (Infante and Gordon, 1989). There were other arguments against encouraging humour in workplaces based on perceptions of reduced respect for managers (Duncan and Feisal, 1989); the promotion of sexual harassment, especially if jokes are aimed against women (McGee and Shelvin, 2009) and the potential for jokes to be made at the expense of any minority group (Davies, 2002). Significant problems may arise should offensive humour be evident within a workplace. This is a dangerous situation for any workplace given the contemporary ramifications for employers in regard to bullying and sexual harassment (Quinn, 2000).

An opposing perspective suggests that humour can have a positive impact on groups of people including organisations and workplaces as long as the humour is appropriate. The acceptance and use of appropriate humour within workplaces has been shown to have significant benefits for both the employee and organisational effectiveness (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Crawford, 1994; Rizzo, Wanzer and Booth-Butterfield, 1999; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew and Viswesvaran, 2012). Improved mental health, as well as increased job satisfaction and workplace involvement, is apparent with workers who participate in workplace humour, and workers enjoying humour at work tended to be more satisfied with, and involved in, their job and reported better mental health than those who do not report enjoying humour at work. Those initiating the humour were also less likely to resign from their workplace (Abramis, 1992).

Many aspects of a well-functioning organisation are enhanced as a result of the appropriate use of humour. Workers using such humour have a positive impact on workplace attributes

and productivity indicators such as stress management, organisational commitment, teamwork and cooperation between team members (Romero and Arendt, 2011). There is also greater group cohesiveness, communication, and creativity all of which contributes to a positive organisational culture (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008).

2.4.1 Some reported benefits of humour and laughter in the workplace

Popular books and magazines contain a plethora of case studies detailing their use of humour and the benefits that follow. Among the many case studies examining humour as an important component of organisational culture are Castelli (1990) who reported on the Ben & Jerry's ice-cream franchise; Caudron (1992) who examined Kodak when it held a dominant position in photographic film sector, and Hudson (2001) who explained the corporate culture of the Brady Corporation from her perspective as the CEO of that organisation. Hudson reported that getting the people at Brady to loosen up and enjoy themselves fostered a company esprit de corps and greater team camaraderie. Humour used in the Brady Corporation started conversations that sparked innovation, helped to memorably convey corporate messages to employees, and increased productivity by reducing stress. The company doubled its sales and almost tripled its net income and market capitalisation over seven years (Hudson, 2001). The improvements experienced by the Brady Corporation suggest that promoting fun within the workplace can lead not only to a robust corporate culture but can also improve business performance. A similar corporate culture initiative from within Southwest Airlines helped facilitate learning, promoted increased creativity and helped employees feel less threatened by change (Barbour, 1998).

Potential workplace benefits arising from the appropriate use of humour include collaborative team and relationship building (Bennis, 1997; Hudson, 2001; Dziegielewski et al., 2003; Chapman and Foot, 2007; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008), improved communications (Dziegielewski et al., 2003; Zinker, 2003; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008), enhanced training outcomes (Hill, 1988; Ziv, 1988; Abramis, 1991, Barbour, 1998; Dziegielewski et al., 2003), greater employee motivation (Abramis, 1989); reduced work stress (Hudson, 2001; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew and Viswesvaran, 2012), reduced staff turnover (Abramis, 1992), enhanced creativity (Abramis, 1991; Murdock and Ganim, 1993; Barbour, 1998; Hudson, 2001; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006), improved leadership connection (Avolio, et al., 1999; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew and Viswesvaran, 2012), increased job satisfaction and engagement (Davis and Kleiner, 1989; Abramis, 1989 and 1992; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew and Viswesvaran, 2012), increased productivity (Avolio et al., 1999; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008) and building a ‘fun’ organisational culture without having a detrimental effect of workplace outcomes (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006).

In addition, Noon and Blyton, (1997, pp. 159–160) observe that ‘joking at work plays an important regulatory function by providing a means of expression that assists group cohesion, deflects attention from the dehumanising aspects of work and acts to preserve the existing power hierarchy’. They see humour as a vital factor in this context as it can help suppress ‘the alienating tendencies of work.’

The growing significance of humour as a legitimate additive to a manager’s skill-set is evident from colleges and universities responding to a demand from the business sector that humour be included in leadership and management studies. For example, the Singapore

Government's (2013) Public Sector Leadership and Management program conducted by the Civil Service College includes a course entitled, *How leaders and managers can engage staff through humour*. The course synopsis suggests that 'humour provides an important key to creating a more open and responsive workplace'. The synopsis details the potential benefits of humour including less 'burnout', improved communication, enhanced problem solving skills and better employee relations. It concludes that through using humour, professionals not only become more productive on the job, but they also enjoy their work more.

There is also considerable interest in the notion of happiness and wellbeing in the workplace and an impressive body of work is being done in this area. An indicator as to the importance placed on this is the annual 'Happiness, Health and Wellbeing @ Work' conference conducted by the Workplace Research Centre based at the University of Sydney. At this conference the latest research and strategies on workplace health and wellbeing programs are presented by some of Australia's leading experts on psychology, leadership and human resource management.

Case studies featuring happy, workplaces regularly appear in newspapers, magazines and journals such as the Australian Financial Review's *Boss Magazine*, *The Australian Weekend Professional* and *HR Monthly* (e.g. November 2011), and although these are not academic publications, the case studies presented serve as a positive source of inspiration for other organisations.

2.4.2 Work attitudes and performance

The primary aim of this study is to explore the possible benefits flowing through to a workplace from fostering or accepting the appropriate use of positive humour within that

workplace. For the purposes of this thesis, the two elements chosen as indicators of workplace effectiveness were work attitudes and work performance. Work attitudes can be determined in part by assessing a worker's job satisfaction, their intention to stay with the organisation (turnover) and their attachment (affective commitment) to that organisation. These attitudes cannot be underestimated as employees rating highly in the three elements (satisfaction, turnover intention and attachment) are very loyal to their employer and are generally viewed as good productive workers (Warr, Cook and Wall, 1979; Abramis, 1992; Seligman, 2002; Hosie et al., 2006; Martin, 2007; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008; Morrison, 2012). Such workers tend to be absent from work less frequently and project a positive image of their workplace into the broader community both through their interactions with customers and also through their social networks (Stone, 2008). Clearly, employees who are dissatisfied with their job and who are looking for other employment opportunities have reduced attachment to their employer (Rose, 2002). Such employees can do significant damage to the organisation, in terms of reputation, productivity and physically, through their 'bad' attitude.

Similarly, for the purposes of this study, work performance can be assessed, in part, by an employee's demonstrated teamwork; their creativity and innovation; the contribution they make to the organisation and the discretionary effort expended by the employee above and beyond the employer's expectations (Vroom, 1964; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Guest, 2002; Morrison, 2012). Ideally these assessments would be made for each worker by their supervisor. Performance is also significantly associated with higher work satisfaction (Guest, 2002). Similar relationships can be found linking all of the selected attitudinal and performance indicators to workplace outcomes.

Most of the indicators selected to assess workplace outcomes through work attitude and work performance measures are also positively linked to humour (see 2.1.1 and 2.4). Therefore, through an amalgamation of the literature covering these topics, the first two hypotheses emerge. These are:

H_{1.1}: *Positive humour is positively related to work performance.*

H_{1.2}: *Positive humour is positively related to work attitudes.*

2.4.3 Fostering a ‘fun climate’ in the workplace

This section examines the promotion of a ‘fun climate’ within workplaces. Again, some clarity of intent through definition is initially required. Much has been written about the constructs ‘organisational climate’ and ‘organisational culture’ with debates occurring over which term is most appropriate or, if indeed, there is any difference between them (Duncan, 1996; Wallace et al., 1999; Ashkanasy et al. 2000; Glisson and James, 2002; Sarros et al., 2008).

In the *Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate* (Ashkanasy et al., 2000) use the term ‘organisational culture’ rather than ‘organisational climate’ for most of its discussion but there appears to be numerous crossovers between these two constructs without explanation. A possible reason that ‘culture’ is overtaking ‘climate’ as the preferred term may merely be one of fashion – ‘organisational culture’ being the most recently coined phrase. Also the word ‘climate’ may not sound as profound and learned as does ‘culture’, so perhaps it lost its academic appeal. Another school of thought is that ‘climate’ is a manifestation of ‘culture’ and that, within a climate there may be multiple sub-cultures. A study of organisational climate reported by Martin et al. (2014, p.3), showed how ‘individuals within a workgroup

might share perceptions about features of their work environment’ and how ‘these shared perceptions can impact on individual employee outcomes’. Another view was proposed by Stone (2008, p.30) who suggested that an organisation’s culture is formed by its psychological and social climate. After examining the use of the two words, Denison (1996, p. 646), reported that ‘... a stronger interpretation of my conclusions is that the culture and climate literatures actually address a common phenomenon.’

Whilst acknowledging that there is now a stronger delineation between the two constructs (Schneider et al., 2013), for the purposes of this current research it is assumed that the words ‘climate’ and ‘culture’ are interchangeable with a definition covering these constructs being ‘the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviours they observe being rewarded and that are supported and expected; together with the shared basic assumptions, values, and beliefs that characterise a setting and are taught to newcomers as the proper way to think and feel’; that is ‘the way we are and the way we do things around here!’

If a ‘fun climate’ were to be promoted within a workplace, then this will be embodied in the organisation’s policies and employee practices and the shared employee values around having fun, humour and laughter would influence to workplace culture. In this current research the existence or otherwise of a ‘fun climate’ was determined by a shared perception at a team level concurring with the assertion by Dextras-Gauthier et al. (2012) that features of the work environment may be evaluated similarly by members of the specific workgroup or team, and ‘a single demonstration of organizational culture, such as shared values, is representative of the whole culture of an organization’ (Dextras-Gauthier et al., 2012 p. 83).

Chapters 4.5.6 and 4.9 provide further detail on the participating organisations' fun climate determined at a team level.

A fun work environment promotes positive and happy moods within employees and this in turn increased organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Chan, 2010). The fun workplace activities studied by Chan led to the development of a framework to help create a positive work environment; aid the attraction and retention of employees and supported the organisation's efforts encouraging the general wellbeing of employees. This framework also proposes that an organisation that supports a fun environment in which to work will benefit from enhanced creativity, communication, satisfaction and enthusiasm amongst its employees.

Popular texts like Von Oech (1983), Lundin et al. (2000), and Yerkes (2007) which are based on practical corporate examples strongly support the view that working in a fun environment has more productive outcomes than working in a routine environment. Workplace fun has a positive impact on worker attributes such as job satisfaction, morale, pride, creativity and quality (Murdock and Ganim, 1993; Barbour, 1998; Deal and Kennedy, 1999) counters the negative effects of stress and burnout (Hudson, 2001; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006) and leads to less absenteeism and staff turnover (Abramis, 1992; Abner, 1997).

However Critchley (2002, p.13) warns against a top-down imposition of 'fun' activities. He reports on observations he made witnessing employees of a company participating in games of hopscotch, frisbee throwing and kickball. Although there was much clapping, cheering and laughter accompanying these activities, some employees privately confessed to joining in only because they did not want to be seen as 'a bad sport or a party pooper'. The inference

here is that for organisational fun and humour to be productive, it should be both naturally occurring (organic) and positive.

Organisations that have a fun culture are characterised by regular laughter and experiences of joy, happiness, surprise, jollity, spontaneity, and light-heartedness within workplace relationships. The two most important benefits of workplaces with a fun culture are increased staff commitment and the organisation's attractiveness to potential employees. Increased commitment is reflected in employee attributes such as loyalty and dedication, and staff turnover (Ford, Newstrom and McLaughlin, 2004). As discussed in 2.1.6, humour is a contributor to joy, happiness and laughter but is not a unique factor in these emotions and responses. As laughter, joy and happiness are among the experiences of a workplace which indicate the existence of a fun culture, it was decided to investigate the influence that an established fun culture may have on the relationship between humour and work performance, and humour and work attitude within work teams. For the purposes of this research, a 'team' is considered to be a number of people formally grouped within the structure of an organisation to work together interdependently and cooperatively to meet specific long or short-term organisational goals.

Therefore the third and fourth hypotheses to be tested are:

H_{1.3}: *The relationship between positive humour and work performance in a work team will be moderated by the level of a 'Fun Climate' within that team.*

H_{1.4}: *The relationship between positive humour and work attitude in a work team will be moderated by the level of a 'Fun Climate' within that team.*

2.4.4 Humour and leadership

The emotions of those in position of powers, or with a higher organisational status, have a greater influence on subordinates than the emotions of subordinates have on their superiors. This observation has significant implications for organisational leaders suggesting that how leaders control or project their emotions will either have an uplifting or a detrimental effect on their subordinates (Anderson, Keltner and John, 2003). A 'sense of humour' is one of seven core skills, competencies and qualities that workers look for in their managers or leaders. The other attributes were honesty and integrity; competence and credibility; ability to motivate and inspire; good two-way communications skills and equity and fairness (Foster, 2005). Prior research suggest that managers who possess or develop a strong sense of humour make the most effective leaders (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008); will have improved management style and performance (Crawford, 1994); and will be better liked by their subordinates (Rizzo, Wanzer and Booth-Butterfield, 1999).

A leader's decision whether or not to use humour at work may be influenced by their individual 'leadership style'. Traditional leadership styles were labelled as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire (Lewin, Lippit and White, 1939) to which 'bureaucratic' was later added. Since then many other descriptors are used to designate a specific leadership style. These include transformational, transactional, creative, corrective, change, intelligence, multicultural, pedagogical, servant, bridging and purposeful. Perhaps the most useful leadership style advice is the use of the 'situational leadership model' which suggests that a 'one-size-fits-all' model of leadership is impractical as the most appropriate leadership style needs to vary dependent upon the specific situation in which a leader must lead (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). This same advice applies to a leader's use of humour. There will be times

when its use is inappropriate and an effective leader will have the maturity and judgement to understand this.

However the constructive use of humour typifies effective leadership with hundreds of actual incidents being reported to support the link between humour, laughter and leadership effectiveness (Goleman et al., 2002). Using humour, even in tense situations, will send a strong positive message from the leader or manager that will 'shift the underlying emotional tone of the interaction' (Goleman et al., 2002, pp. 34 - 35). Managers who believed they use positive humour in their communications with their subordinates, when viewed from their organisations' perspective, supported the notion that humour contributed significantly to maintaining a congenial organisational climate. They also acknowledged that certain kinds of humour were more appropriate than others (Martin et al., 2004). This observation is particularly relevant considering the focus of the current research is on positive humour only.

The potential for a mismatch between what the supervisor may think of as humorous and how that might be perceived by the subordinates is significant. Collinson (2002) warns that managerial humour may backfire by reinforcing employee cynicism. Managers may use humour in ways that are offensive or oppressive, may express aggression and hostility, and may reinforce gender stereotypes. Managers who artificially incorporate joking into their control practices, reduce humour to a manipulated commodity which has a number of inherent problems including ethical issues that arise from their attempts to manipulate workplace humour (Collinson, 2002). However these considerations would also fall outside the parameters of positive humour.

Considering the value of a leader's sense of humour to the organisation and the positive effect this has on dealings with subordinates, it may follow that the sense of humour exercised by the organisation's leader / manager / supervisor may impact upon the relationship between the subordinate's use of positive humour and the two workplace outcomes; performance and attitude. The subsequent hypotheses to be tested are therefore:

H_{1.5}: *The relationship between positive humour and work performance within a work team will be moderated by the level of the team's supervisor's sense of humour.*

H_{1.6}: *The relationship between positive humour and work attitude within a work team will be moderated by the level of the team's supervisor's sense of humour.*

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored many benefits of positive humour. Table 2.1 showed that there is a tradition of research into the use of humour measuring a variety of positive outcomes ranging from coping with stress to communications and creativity. However, research into workplace benefits of humour is relatively new and limited. This is the research opportunity pursued in this thesis. Detailed discussions about the benefits of humour have been restricted to those which may have a direct influence of workplace outcomes and are the focus of the current research.

The literature examined in this chapter included a history of humour studies and humour use, style and benefits. The operationalisation of humour in academic studies was discussed as well as the relationships between humour, health, and stress management. If the only

benefits to be derived from the appropriate use of positive humour in workplaces were enhanced overall health and stress reduction, these alone would be a worthy pursuit. However, the principle objective of this thesis is to explore positive workplace outcomes which were examined through literature covering some elements of work attitude and work performance. Further, the influence of a fun climate and a supervisor's sense of humour were also examined. The hypotheses emerging from this chapter are tabulated at the beginning of Chapter 4 for quick reference.

Humour in the workplace, or organisational humour, is defined in this thesis as consisting of amusing communications that produce positive emotions and cognitions within individuals, groups or organisations (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). Such humour may be regarded as an example of Positive Organisational Behaviour. A more detailed exploration of Positive Psychology, Positive Organisational Behaviour, Positive Organisational Scholarship and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) follows in Chapter 3. These explorations follow a discussion on happiness, wellbeing and positivity in workplaces and culminate in the consideration of positive humour as a possible indicator of PsyCap.

CHAPTER THREE

POSITIVITY IN ORGANISATIONS

FROM HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING TO PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Most companies have it backwards: instead of trying to motivate their employees, they need to stop demotivating them. Harvard Business Publishing Newsletters, 1 July 2008.

The previous chapter examined humour as a human attribute, reporting on historical studies of humour, emergent theories about its use and the potential for its acceptance as a valuable human resource in developing physiological, psychological and sociological well-being. An identified lack of clarity surrounding humour and related topics was discussed, as was potential confusion arising from a lack of differentiation between positive and negative humour. This general examination then focused on the possible use and benefits of humour within contemporary workplaces, specifically in relation to positive, inclusive and affiliative humour (Martin et al. 2003).

In recent years there has also been a growing awareness of the value of positivity to the well-functioning human (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Fredrickson et al., 2003). This chapter aims to explore positivity and make the connection between this field of study and positive humour, especially within workplaces. It begins by discussing the growing interest in positivity through happiness and well-being in workplaces; and examines links between these and humour. The chapter then explores the more scientifically based studies of Positive Psychology, Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS), Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) and Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

culminating in an exploration of the possibility of positive humour being considered as an indicator of PsyCap. Hypotheses to test these possible relationships are developed as a result of the literature reviewed.

3.1 Happiness, wellbeing and positivity in organisations

Positivity promotes a positive sense of self and an imperative to feel good about oneself. It emphasizes human strength rather than frailty, and virtue rather than vice (Kowalski, 2002; Lynch and O'Mara, 2015). Increased feelings of positivity enhance social connection and help increase positive social emotions. Not only is social connection a fundamental human motive, feeling socially connected confers mental and physical health benefits (Hutcherson et al., 2008). These benefits also have a positive effect on workplace outcomes. Positive emotions are instrumental in helping people create their own desirable outcomes. Happier people achieve better outcomes in their life ranging from supportive relationships to effective coping skills and improved physiological health even extending to longevity (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Happiness often precedes these positive outcomes rather than simply resulting from them (Cohn et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that happiness not only correlates strongly with workplace success, it often precedes success measures. The positive affect associated with happiness in turn leads to improved workplace outcomes (Boehm and Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Positivity however, should not be so 'blinkered' as to ignore the redeeming features of some aversive behaviours (Kowalski, 2002). There are situations in life where complaining or expressing anger is the only way to ensure that some satisfactory actions are taken to redress that which is the cause of the upset, even if these actions may be viewed as 'negative'. But

having such a positive view of oneself that credit is taken for others' efforts, or others are blamed for one's own failures, is not helpful (Lynch and O'Mara, 2015).

The concept of positivity has also been questioned for other reasons. Fineman (2006) expressed concerns about positivity including methodological challenges - research he reports as appearing unreflexive and value-naïve, and being blind to the moral and political implications of its science. The validity of the study of positivity and positive psychology was also questioned with suggestions that it is an illusion; a 'quack science' that may even be harmful (Hedges, 2009 p.117).

However, the existence of a complementary relationship between positivity, happiness and well-being has been reported (Kuiper, 1978; Cheng and Furnham, 2001) with benefits for employees and organisations (Wright, 2003). Research over the past few decades has asserted that there are benefits of positive emotions for mental and physical health (Fry, 1992 and 1994; Ruch, 1993; Fredrickson, 1998).

Positivity, as used in this thesis, is the ability to seek solutions rather than dwell on problems; to reframe challenges so they present opportunities; and to look for the positives in all situations.

The term 'happiness' has carried many different meanings over the years. By defining happiness we may be propagating an ideology because technical discussions about the proper use of words tend to cover up an ideological debate about value priorities (Veenhoven, 1991). However, a 'happy person' can be regarded as someone who frequently experiences positive

emotions such as joy, satisfaction, contentment, enthusiasm and interest (Boehm and Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Happiness is also considered to be more than merely a result of achieving something pleasurable, but rather to engage in activities that stretch people mentally and physically, and with successful outcomes beyond oneself (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Happiness in this context does not simply happen; it is an emotion that individuals can bring upon themselves by simply 'doing our best'. These moments when one is at the pinnacle of human happiness are termed 'flow' by Csikszentmihalyi (2003). Although success can lead to happiness there is also a case argued for the reverse causal direction. Happy people display positive affect more frequently and this leads to adaptive characteristics and, in turn, success. Happy people also experience more positive affect and less negative affect from humour than do unhappy people (Lyubomirsky and Tucker, 1998; Ruch, 1998; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The most important resource-building human trait is productivity at work. Although it is almost impossible to untangle whether higher job satisfaction makes someone happier or vice versa, it is apparent that happier people are much more satisfied with their jobs than less happy people. In addition, happiness leads to more productivity and higher incomes and happier people are more highly evaluated by their supervisors (Seligman, 2002).

New empirical evidence is emerging that suggests affective well-being and intrinsic job satisfaction for managers will influence performance within their workplace. As managers' performance impacts on organisational productivity and the economic prosperity of individual businesses, and in turn their nation-states, it is suggested that managers' jobs be changed to ensure a continuation or enhancement of 'happiness' in their work situation (Hosie et al., 2006). Contemporary understandings about aspects of human behaviour that

contribute to workplace performance and productivity have been enhanced through the research conducted by Hosie et al. (2006) concerned with the happy, productive worker hypothesis.

The importance of happiness at work can be approached from a number of differing perspectives including productivity, stress relief, and the 'value' of the work done expressed by workers as pride and the meaningfulness of their chosen vocation. An improvement in productivity alone, which is usually the sole emphasis of many contemporary organisations, is not sufficient. Health, happiness and productivity are the essential ingredients of a good society and for people to be happy with their lives generally, they must be happy at work (Gavin and Mason, 2004).

The contagious nature of emotions, whether it is between couples in a relationship, families, teams or groups of workers, is well researched (Anderson, Keltner and John, 2003).

Happiness can influence the feelings and performances of others. Participants within the work groups studied by Anderson, Keltner and John (2003) tended to influence each other through the emotions they were experiencing at the time.

There is obviously some relationship between these human characteristics of humour and laughter, happiness and joy, and well-being, but to clearly state this relationship is sometimes impeded by the common use of the words and their inter-changeability. However, it is apparent that humour is one of many elements that may contribute to happiness, just as happiness may be an integral part of overall well-being. Seligman (2002) includes playfulness and humour as one of his signature strength tests leading to 'authentic happiness'.

When people are asked what they mean by ‘happiness’ they usually give one of two kinds of answer. They either describe it as being in a ‘state of joy’, the most frequent answer, or as being in a ‘state of satisfaction’. The first answer (joy) is an emotion, the second a cognition as a result of reflection (Argyle and Martin, 1991). So joy may be one element in a measurement of happiness. If happiness and joy, assisted by humour and evidenced through laughter are all part of a person’s workplace experience, one would assume a positive state exists and workplace wellbeing is enhanced (Page, 2005).

In recent years, the economic productivity that is claimed by many OECD-based organisations has been largely at the expense of the average worker, with the actual cost savings made often being traded off against workers’ health and happiness (Doherty and Horsted, 1995; Hiltrop, 1996; Gandolfi, 2005). For people to find genuine happiness in their lives today they must be happy whilst at work. If the aim of society is to create and maintain happy, healthy and productive workplaces, then there should be a greater emphasis on positive psychology (Gavin and Mason, 2004).

3.2 Positive psychology

Looking specifically for workplace implications, Martin (2005) explored the role of positive psychology in enhancing workplace satisfaction, motivation and productivity. An integrative framework based on the ‘broaden-and-build’ theory of positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2001; Martin, 2005) included key dimensions such as workplace resilience, leadership and management styles, motivating workplace climates and staff morale. Positive emotions may also be regarded as indicators of optimal well-being or flourishing and moreover, positive emotions can also produce flourishing. Further, positive emotions can enhance individual

growth and social connection that can transform people's life for the better and enable a happier life in the future (Fredrickson, 2001).

Shifting the focus from examining those things that are going wrong in people's lives, and to concentrate and build upon those aspects of their lives that are going well, was the basis of the theory proposed by Seligman (2002). He wrote that it was time for science to seek an understanding of positive emotion and to help people build strength and virtue, and provide direction for them to find the 'good life'. Past emphases had always been on human foibles rather than strengths (Gable and Haidt, 2005). This is possibly because positive events, information and processes occur more frequently than do negative ones. Therefore humans tend to dwell on negative events, negative information and negative interactions because they are out-of-the-ordinary. These negative experiences are the exception rather than the usual.

The past focus on negative tendencies was reflected in studies of human emotions and their impact on organisations. Ashkanasy and Ashton-James (2007, p. 60) reported that 'mirroring the emphasis on negative emotions in organizational research, however, much of the literature in emotions research in general has been oriented towards the negative emotions'. Worker emotions and moods are a mediating factor within a work environment because of their potential impact on job attitudes and worker behaviour (Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000). Positive emotion as a component of positive psychology in a workplace context is therefore an important consideration. Fredrickson (2001) explored positive emotions and their place within the emerging field of positive psychology. Her broaden-and-build theory suggested positive emotions may be a fundamental human strength essential to the positive psychology-based concept of human flourishing.

Ashkanasy and Ashton-James (2007, p. 57) assert that managers need to 'shift their focus to the positive aspects of organizational functioning and achievement, rather than dwell on the defensive measures needed to deal with real and imagined negative contingencies'.

However, Fineman (2006, p. 270) raises concerns about an exclusive positivity-focused management approach suggesting that both positive and negative feelings are 'intimately connected and that adaptive strengths are a product of both'. He also suggests that positiveness should be considered only in concert with different culture valuations and questions the value of some human resource management practices such as empowerment, emotional intelligence and 'fun at work' proposals which emanate from a premise of positivity.

Whilst Gable and Haidt were supportive of the work done in the positive psychology movement to date, they felt that more had to be done in the area of strengthening positive institutions and communities, the third of the original three pillars identified by Seligman (2002) – the other two pillars being positive subjective experience and positive individual characteristics (i.e. strengths and virtues). By effectively mapping the realm of optimal human functioning, positive psychology will help future practitioners develop strategies to build individual strengths and resilience, and to build upon positive experiences and relationships (Ryff, 2003; Gable and Haidt, 2005). This understanding of optimal human functioning and positive psychology would ultimately see the development of effective interventions to increase and sustain these processes. This represents a significant opportunity for developing organisational effectiveness as positive emotions appear to be a fundamental aspect of an individual's well-being as well as an organisation's success.

Employees who are generally in a good mood at work will benefit more both financially and intrinsically through job satisfaction than their negative emotion-favouring colleagues. Similarly employees exhibiting positive emotions at work were likely to receive more favourable supervisor evaluations and, after a period of time, higher salaries, than their more negative counterparts (Straw et al., 1994; Cabrera, 2012). Positive workers also gain more supervisor and co-worker support over time suggesting a more supportive social context (Straw et al., 1994). Managers seeking the optimal performance from their organisation and workers should consider the various emotional states that are evident throughout their workplace along with the actual work being performed. Just as positive emotions can spread within the organisation, so too can negative emotions such as fear and anxiety. While organisation-wide positivity can take some time to build, negativity can spread rapidly in organisations creating distrust, demotivation and dissatisfaction among workers (Straw et al.1994).

3.3 Positive Organisational Scholarship and Positive Organisational Behaviour

When developing an organisational mission based on Positive Psychology, the focus is on both individual human strengths and positive institutions (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Science-based, positively oriented approaches to organisational behaviour emerged from the Positive Psychology research resulting in two complementary movements (Luthans et al., 2007). Both movements had parallel interests and studies in the fields of positive psychology, organisational theory and human behaviour. They were both based on a scientific understanding of the psychology of positive human functioning and the

development of effective interventions to help individuals, families, and communities thrive (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Much of the theory underpinning both POS and POB is not new. POB emerged from Positive Psychology which changed the focus of psychology from an emphasis on fixing those aspects of humans' lives that are troublesome to one of building upon our positive qualities (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). POS applies this 'psychology of positive human functioning' to organisations and builds on POB which is based on an individual's positive psychology. Luthans et al., (2007, p. 10) differentiate between POB and POS stating that whilst they are complementary, POS tends to focus on the macro level and considers constructs such as virtuousness and compassion, whereas POB has more to do with the micro level and individual attributes that are state-like, open to development and related to specified outcomes. Further, Luthans et al., (2007, p.16) state that POB is restricted to positive activities that have an impact on performance whereas to date, most of the POS constructs do not have a demonstrated relationship with performance.

3.3.1 Positive Organisational Scholarship

Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) calls for a focus on what is right within organisations (Cameron et al., 2003). This includes an emphasis on identifying human strengths, building resilience and understanding human 'excellence' as vital contributors to exceptional enterprises. It is the study of positive outcomes, processes and attributes demonstrated by organisations and individuals within those organisations. It emphasises the 'goodness' and positive potential of humans and focuses on organisational and individual

attributes for which words such as excellent, flourishing, resilient, thriving or virtuous might apply (Cameron et al., 2003a).

The research conducted by Hosie et al., (2006) specifically examined the role of managers within organisations and how ‘happiness’ impacted on their performance, affective wellbeing and intrinsic job satisfaction. However, its application to workers generally is evident. The study undertaken by Hosie et al. (2006) may be considered part of an emerging emphasis on POS; a movement described by as a health-based model proposing that by understanding and enabling human potential, a positive path to human and organisational welfare can be created (Cameron et al., 2003). POS, like the performance benefits of happiness and wellbeing, is applicable to all workers, not just those elevated to managerial positions.

3.3.2 Positive Organisational Behaviour

Luthans (2002a, p. 59) termed the positive approach to developing organisational behaviour, Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), which is defined as ‘the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace.’

Luthans et al., (2007a) acknowledge POB as recognising much of the historical organisational theories postulated by earlier psychologists and academics such as Maslow, McGregor and Herzberg. They also acknowledge contemporary theories and fields of research that are positively oriented are, in turn, recognised in POB. These include job

satisfaction, organisational citizenship, organisational commitment, intrinsic motivation and, of specific interest in this research, humour.

For a construct to be included in POB it must be based on reliable and valid measures, and it must be state-like; that is, they are human behaviours that are malleable, open for development and can change or be changed by some intervention (Luthans et al., 2007).

State-like qualities are the opposite of traits which are human behaviours defined as stable and enduring over a variety of situations and circumstances. It must also be relatively unique to the field of organisational behaviour and have a positive impact on individual-level performance and job satisfaction in the workplace. Recent workplace studies link organisational well-being with factors such as POS and POB. It is been found that POS and POB are, in part, addressing the need for more to be done in the area of strengthening positive institutions and communities (Gable and Haidt, 2005; Page and Vella-Broderick, 2009).

Using the POB framework, focusing on enhancing and supporting human strengths within workplaces is seen as a more effective and desirable method of building organisations than by addressing their inherent weaknesses (Luthans, 2002). POB emphasises the need for a more effective application of positive traits, states, and behaviours within employees in organisations (Luthans and Youssef, 2007). It focuses on 'the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace' (Luthans, 2002, p. 59).

With a focus on workplace performance improvement, Luthans (2002) proposed that researchers should concentrate on psychological states that could be measured and potentially improved with appropriate interventions. He nominated the psychological states hope, resilience and confidence (self-efficacy) at this time. When Luthans, Luthans and Luthans (2004) first introduced the construct ‘positive psychological capital’, these three states, together with optimism, formed the basis of that construct which is now known as Psychological Capital (PsyCap).

3.4 Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Initial research indicated that four positive psychological capacities (namely self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism) may contribute more in combination and through interaction than as individual considerations (Luthans et al., 2007). Luthans et al. termed this construct Psychological Capital (PsyCap), a higher-order core construct defined by these four positive psychological capacities with the stated outcome of improving individual and group attitudinal outcomes as well as overall organisational performance. Luthans et al., (2007, p. 19) state that the ‘impact of investing in, developing, and managing overall PsyCap on performance and attitudinal outcomes’ may be greater than a similar approach to its individual components. That is, considering PsyCap as a whole may be greater than the sum of its individual parts from which it is comprised. In addition, Luthans et al. (2007) provide guidance on developing each of the four PsyCap components to enhance organisational performance and competitive advantage detailing each of the four components with specific definitions to ensure the overall intent of PsyCap is not diluted by generalised assumptions as

to their intended meanings. These specific definitions of the four PsyCap components; hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, together with the genesis of each, are discussed below.

3.4.1 Hope

For the purposes of PsyCap, hope is defined as ‘a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of agency and pathways’ (Snyder, 2000). In this definition, ‘agency’ refers to the energies or willpower needed to achieve goals, and ‘pathways’ is the planning required to achieve those goals.

The state-like nature of hope, together with its capacity to be developed through proven interventions, ensured its inclusion in the PsyCap construct. The interventions through which ‘hope’ could be developed include goal setting, stretch goal setting, stepping (i.e. approaching goals in small, manageable steps), contingency planning and re-goaling to diminish the effects of ‘false-hopes’.

The relationship between hope and performance in many aspects of human life, including work, is now well established. Hope has been shown to enhance workplace performance in studies noted by Luthans et al., (2007 p. 17 and p. 67)

3.4.2 Optimism

Historically, optimism has been regarded as a basis for a wide range of positive outcomes. These include physical and psychological health, coping abilities and general well-being. Conversely, pessimism has been related to a variety of negative outcomes including poor physical health and depression (Seligman, 2002). An appropriate definition of optimism for the purposes of this study, is ‘a mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the

social or material future - one which the evaluator regards as socially desirable, to his [or her] advantage, or for his [or her] pleasure' (Tiger, 1979).

Optimism and related constructs have been widely studied in a large number of behavioural contexts over the past decades and have been useful in assessing an individual's capacity to adjust to difficult life experiences as well as predicting their displayed behaviour and emotional responses when faced with difficult circumstances, as well as their ability to cope them (Carver, 2005). Of particular relevance to PsyCap, optimism has been shown to have a positive relationship with workplace performance (Luthans et al., 2007). The developmental nature of optimism enables it to be learned and expanded and there are strategies to help develop optimism that lead to improved emotional well-being, better coping strategies and improved physical health outcomes (Carver and Scheier, 2005; Carver, Scheier and Segerstrom, 2010).

3.4.3 Resilience

Resilience is defined as 'the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility' (Luthans, 2002, p.702). The positive psychology perspective of resilience is that it is a learnable attribute that can be developed in most people. This is a contrary view to the traditional impression of resilience only residing in a select few exceptional people who have earned recognition and admiration through circumstances and commendable actions in the past. Rather than resilient people being drawn solely from exceptional case studies where extreme odds are overcome, the PsyCap definition suggests resilient people are those who accept the reality of the situation facing them, hold firmly to their values and beliefs, and use intrinsic adaptive skills that allow them to respond appropriately to, and cope effectively with, unexpected situations. As

PsyCap imposes additional meaning to words like resilience, it is important to acknowledge that in this context resilience is not restricted to a functioning reactive capacity in times of crisis but also contains a proactive aspect even if no immediate external threat is apparent. For example, this quality allows setbacks and other adverse occurrences to be viewed as learning experiences and opportunities for growth and development. Resilience therefore comes from the everyday, ordinary and normative human resources and has significant implications for developing human capital and promoting competence within individuals and societies (Luthans et al., 2007). Positive emotion may be a primary ingredient in the building of resilience (Fredrickson et al., 2003). These positive emotions that are strengthening resilience may actually be characterised by smiles and laughter (Bonanna et al., 2003 cited in Luthans et al., 2006).

3.4.4 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy within the context of PsyCap is best encapsulated in the chapter heading given by Luthans et al., (2007, p. 33) when detailing this construct: *PsyCap Efficacy – Confidence to succeed*. Self-efficacy relates to the belief that one can achieve what one sets out to do. Those with a high degree of self-efficacy will be healthier, more effective and generally more successful than those with a low self-efficacy expectation (Bandura, 1997). Luthans (2002) argues for the inclusion of self-efficacy into POB (and ultimately into PsyCap) on the basis of its extensive and well-established, research-based foundation and the fact that it had been primarily supported and measured as a state.

Self-efficacy in the PsyCap context is characterised by the individual's propensity to set themselves challenging goals, volunteer for difficult tasks, be self-motivated and invest significant personal effort toward accomplishing tasks and achieving goals (Luthans et al. 2007, p.39). Less efficacious individuals are more prone to failure and despair when faced

with negative feedback, setbacks or disapproval by those around them, and will lose confidence through self-created doubts over their own capacities and capabilities (Bandura and Locke, 2003)

PsyCap self-efficacy is based on the five cognitive processes that are part of the overall construct namely: symbolising, forethought, observation, self-regulation and self-reflection (Bandura, 1997). Symbolising creates a mental picture of the intended action; forethought is the planning required to accomplish the action; observation allows the individual to learn from the actions of those who have attempted similar actions previously; self-regulation involves the setting of specific goals and performance assessment on the path to completing the action; and self-reflection allows the individual to contemplate the action both in terms of its process and outcome. This latter element serves to advise the individual as to how improve future actions for addressing similar challenges and may add personal meaning and understanding of one-self.

Another benefit of self-efficacy, from an organisational perspective, is its utility as a coping measure for dealing with stress. It is in an organisation's best interest to keep stressors to manageable levels or, in situations where such stressors are inevitable, it would help the organisation if managers were to foster a strong sense of self-efficacy among both individuals and the entire organisation (Jex and Bliese, 1999).

3.4.5 Other possible indicators for inclusion in the PsyCap construct

In addition to the four accepted PsyCap components; hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, other potential positive constructs such as creativity, wisdom, well-being, flow, humour, gratitude, forgiveness, emotional intelligence, spirituality, authenticity and courage were identified (Luthans et al., 2007). These constructs are categorised as cognitive (creativity and wisdom); affective (well-being, flow and humour); social (gratitude, forgiveness, emotional intelligence and spirituality) and higher-order (authenticity and courage). To meet the fundamental criteria determined for PsyCap, these constructs must be positive, theory-based, state-like, measurable, related to work performance and related to other positive outcomes.

These additional considerations that are all regarded as positive constructs satisfy some or all of the stated criteria to varying degrees. Of significance in the present research, humour satisfied these criteria with the exception of some doubt being present as to humour being related to work performance (Luthans et al., 2007). The basic premise of this thesis is that, by focusing on positive humour, there will be a positive relationship shown with workplace performance strengthening the acceptance of humour (specifically positive humour) within the PsyCap construct. Humour generally has a positive impact within groups but the damaging possibilities of negative humour style preferences are also acknowledged (Luthans et al., 2007). This differentiation between the styles of humour being assessed aligns with the views expressed by Martin et al., (2003) leading to the development of the Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) which was used in the current research.

3.5 Humour and PsyCap

The relationship between a sense of humour and PsyCap was explored in a cross-sectional survey conducted by Hughes (2008). The two instruments completed by the 92 participants in Hughes's research were the Thorson and Powell (1993) Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) and the Luthans et al., (2007) PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ-24). Hughes reported that the overall sense of humour and PsyCap were positively and significantly related. He then examined each of the PsyCap elements reporting that optimism, resilience and self-efficacy (reported by Hughes as 'confidence') all shared a positive relationship with an overall sense of humour, but hope did not.

This study partly builds on the research conducted by Hughes (2008), but in lieu of using the Thorson and Powell (1993) Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) this research uses the Martin et al., (2003) Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ). The MSHS does not address the differentiation between positive and negative humour – that is between humour which may help a workplace in its quest for a happy productive culture and a style of humour which has an opposite and potentially detrimental effect. As the focus of this research is on the workplace effects of positive humour, the work of Martin et al., (2003) in examining the differing styles of humour used by individuals in the HSQ is the significant point-of-difference and fundamental to the aims of this study. It will enable a more specific study of positive humour rather than the general sense of humour used by Hughes, and the relationship between positive humour and PsyCap. This is a unique contribution to the field of humour and PsyCap research.

3.5.1 Humour and hope

The Hope Scale, an individual-difference, self-report measure consisting of twelve items designed to measure the two-factor hope construct developed by Snyder et al., (1991) was used in research conducted by Westburg (2003) to investigate the relationship between hope and humour. The two factors of hope measured were ‘agency’, the energies or willpower needed to achieve goals, and ‘pathways’, the planning required to achieve those goals (Snyder, 2000). The ‘Funny Bone History’, an 11-item open-ended questionnaire developed by Herth (1993), explores the frequency of peoples’ laughter, when they laugh and their experience of humour in their childhood family experiences. This instrument was used to assess the humour of those participating in Westburg’s research.

The ‘Funny Bone History’ was accessed through personal correspondence between Westberg and Herth and, although Herth (1993) did publish in a peer-reviewed journal, no studies relating to the ‘Funny Bone History’ instrument were found in the literature and therefore no data on the psychometric properties of this instrument were available. However the instrument had been widely used in medical practices and hospitals throughout the North American continent to assess patients’ humour and laughter experiences (Westberg, 2003).

Participants with a heightened humour ‘condition’, as evidenced by their ‘Funny Bone History’ responses, generally scored higher on the Hope Scale. For example, higher-hope respondents used humour more frequently as a coping strategy than did lower-hope respondents and higher-hope people were already experiencing the benefits from frequent laughter and playing than were lower-hope people (Westburg, 2003). The current research

will also examine this relationship but will use Luthan et al.'s PsyCap instrument instead of Snyder et al.'s (1991) Hope Scale to test the following hypothesis:

H_{1.7}: *Positive humour is positively related to hope.*

3.5.2 Humour and optimism

It is through the positive emotional states accompanying humour and laughter that benefits, in particular benefits to one's health, may emerge (Martin and Lefcourt, 2004). This is regardless of how the positive emotions are generated. Therefore, humour and laughter in this model may play a lesser role in directly enhancing health but have their inherent positive effects manifested through increasing positive emotions including optimism. Martin (2004, p.4) suggests that, in this context, a 'healthy' sense of humour would generally involve a cheerful temperament which in turn is characterised by 'happiness, joy, optimism, and a playful approach to life.'

In a longitudinal study conducted by Friedman et al., (1993) examining lifetime mortality rates for cheerful and less cheerful people, 'cheerfulness' was assessed as a composite measure based on humour and optimism as rated by others. In another series of studies conducted by Fry (1995), humour and optimism, together with perfectionism, were examined as moderators of health and determinants of coping strategies for executives in high-power, stressful positions. Using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, these studies showed that all the attributes of humour, optimism and perfectionism had significant moderating effects on the relationships between daily workplace disputes, disagreements and harassments, and emotional exhaustion, physical illness and the maintenance of the women's self-esteem. The current research will examine the relationship between positive humour and optimism testing the hypothesis:

H_{1.8}: *Positive humour is positively related to optimism.*

3.5.3 Humour and resilience

People show resilience if, when facing potentially stressful situations, they respond with humour and laughter instead of anger or fear, thus avoiding unproductive emotions (Hughes, 2008). Humour can be regarded as a coping strategy enabling individuals to rise above challenges rather than allowing threats to have an adverse effect which may result in the individual becoming defensive. The humour to be found in such situations helps diminish the fear that may have existed and without the fear factor, the individual will have greater control (Lefcourt, 2001). This perception led to research which concluded that humour was an indicator of resilience being present when an individual was faced with a stressful or fearful situation (Tugade et al., 2004). Subsequent research considered how individuals may develop in a positive manner and therefore increase their resilience when confronting stresses and pressures in life. Instead of merely considering how dysfunctional personality characteristics or stressful events may impact negatively on an individual's well-being, this re-orientation towards resilience has focused on the potentially beneficial role that may flow from positive characteristics. Such positive attributes include humour which can be considered as a positive emotional strategy to help reinterpret a traumatic event or conversely help savour and enjoy a positive event (Kuiper, 2012).

Psychological resilience is the ability to 'bounce back' from negative events, coping through the use of positive emotions. Resilient individuals experience positive emotions even when faced with frightening circumstances or stressful events which may explain their ability to successfully rebound from stressful situations or adversity (Tugade et al. 2004). Tugade et al., (2004, p. 1168) further maintain that resilient people 'may understand the benefits associated with positive emotions and use this knowledge to their advantage when coping

with negative emotional events.’ They reported that people will vary in the degree to which they may use humour as a coping mechanism in stressful situations and that those with a greater tendency to do so will also report an increase in positive mood daily. As part of this study, Tugade et al., (2004) used the *COPE* instrument, a multidimensional instrument designed to assess various ways in which people may respond to stress. The *COPE* instrument examines various coping strategies through the use of 14 subscales, one of which is humour (Carver, 1997). It was shown that behaviours with higher positive emotional granularity scores were more engaged in the coping process and less likely to respond ‘automatically’ without much effort. Humour was shown to be one of the more effective coping behaviours and individuals using humour as an aid to their coping capacities may be more resilient in stressful situations. This will be tested, specifically using positive humour, to address the following hypothesis:

H_{1.9}: *Positive humour is positively related to resilience.*

3.5.4 Humour and self-efficacy

Individuals with a high degree of self-efficacy will be more effective and successful than those with lower self-efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1997). In this context, self-efficacy relates to the belief that one can achieve what one sets out to do. Studies by Thorson et al., (1997) reported a positive relationship existing between self-esteem and humour. Although self-esteem and self-efficacy are conceptually different they are similar in that they both reflect attitudes about oneself, establishing an important linkage between self-efficacy and humour (Hughes, 2008). Falanga et al., (2014), explored humour styles and self-efficacy through a study involving 302 Italian adolescents. In this study Falanga et al., (2014) used an Italian version of Martin et al.’s (2003) Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) developed by

Penzo et al., (2011) and an Empathic and Social Self-efficacy Scales developed by Caprara et al., (2001).

Falanga et al., (2014) determined that affiliative and self-enhancing humour positively correlated with self-efficacy, while the correlation between self-defeating humour and social self-efficacy was negative. The self-efficacy instrument used approaches the construct using two streams: Empathetic Self-efficacy and Social Self-efficacy referring respectively to specific aspects of the individual's psychological and social functioning. The difference between these is that perceived empathic self-efficacy consists of one's ability to understand the needs and feelings of others, whilst social self-efficacy focuses on an individual's ability to play an active role building relationships with others (Falanga et al., 2014). The positive relationship between self-efficacy and positive humour examined by Falanga et al., will be further tested in this current research but with the self-efficacy dimension being tested using Luthans et al.'s (2007) PsyCap instrument in lieu of Caprara et al.'s (2001) Empathic and Social Self-efficacy Scales. The hypothesis to be tested is:

H_{1.10}: Positive humour is positively related to self-efficacy.

3.6 Positive humour as a possible PsyCap attribute

The criteria for positive organisational behaviour listed by Luthans et al., (2007) are (1) that the behaviour being considered is grounded in theory and research; (2) that valid measurements exists to assess the behaviour(s); (3) that the behaviour is relatively unique to the field of organizational behaviour; (4) that it is state-like and thus open to development and change as opposed to a fixed trait; and (5) that it may have a positive impact on work-related individual level performance and satisfaction. Luthans et al. (2007, p. 186) propose

that PsyCap is a higher-order construct. Therefore, synergies exist between the four major factors that meet the criteria detailed above and PsyCap itself may be greater than the sum of these four constituent parts; hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy. Positive humour also satisfies all these criteria, assuming that it can be shown to have a positive impact on overall work performance.

One possible issue exists with the third point (i.e. that the behaviour is relatively unique to the field of organizational behaviour). Humour clearly has a much broader field of use than merely within organisations. However, the humour being studied in this research may fit the description of being 'relatively' unique. Although humour exists within groups other than organisations, the degree to which the humour is deemed appropriate and acceptable in an organisational context, that is, 'positive humour', makes it less ubiquitous and more unique, relatively speaking.

The question to be addressed in this current research is whether or not humour can be considered as a positive construct able to contribute to the higher-order construct of PsyCap. This provides a sound conceptual foundation upon which to continue with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

3.6.1 The relationship between humour and PsyCap

A study to determine the correlations between a sense of humour and positive psychological capital was undertaken by Hughes (2008). In this study, Hughes used Thorson and Powell's (1993) Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) together with Martin et al.'s (2003) Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ) to determine some valuable insights including

significant positive relationships existing between PsyCap and an overall sense of humour plus three of PsyCap's component attributes, namely optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, and an overall sense of humour, as measured by the MSHS.

This thesis focuses solely on the workplace effects of positive humour. It was therefore decided to use the work of Martin et al., (2003) with its differentiated styles of humour, to re-explore the same relationships as those reported by Hughes (2008). The hypotheses H_{1.7} to H_{1.10} (above) were developed to test the specific relationships between positive humour and the four individual components of PsyCap, hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy. A test to determine the relationship between the two umbrella constructs, PsyCap and positive humour, was deemed necessary in the context of the research aims of this study leading to the development of the following hypothesis:

H_{1.11}: *Positive humour is positively related to PsyCap*

3.7 PsyCap, work attitudes and work performance

The value of considering PsyCap as a tool for workplace enhancement appears to be well supported (Luthans et al., 2010; Youssef and Luthans, 2011; Spence-Laschinger and Nosko, 2013; Sihag and Sarikwal, 2014). The association between PsyCap and employee performance suggests that organisations focusing on the development of PsyCap within their workplaces may enhance the overall performance of their employees. By using a web-based intervention program of two to three hours duration, individual employee PsyCap can be developed (Luthans et al., 2008). Although Avey et al., (2011) report that empirical research supporting PsyCap is still emerging, they conclude that managers and those concerned with human resource development can be confident that PsyCap does have a strong and significant

relationship with desirable outcomes such as employee performance. Emerging research shows significant, positive relationships between PsyCap and job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job performance, and negative relationships with turnover intent, cynicism, job stress and deviance (Avey et al., 2011).

The use of PsyCap as an approach to developing employees is attractive because of its malleable nature and its demonstrated positive relationship to overall employee performance (Peterson et al., 2011). The criterion of malleability of the component positive constructs for inclusion in PsyCap relates to each of the individual construct's state-like development potential (Luthans et al., 2007, p.147). Contemporary research consistently demonstrates the positive relationships that exist between PsyCap, organisational outcomes, workplace behaviours and attitudes (Youssef and Luthans, 2012). To further examine this observation, the current study will test the following hypotheses:

H_{1.12}: *PsyCap is positively related to work performance.*

H_{1.13}: *PsyCap is positively related to work attitudes.*

The important relationship between PsyCap and the workplace outcomes considered as a significant focus of this research, (Work Attitude and Work Performance) is to be examined by testing hypotheses H_{1.11} and H_{1.12} as discussed above. However, as the value and benefits of positive humour is the major focus, it is also considered desirable to examine the effect that a combination of the two constructs (positive humour and PsyCap) may have on these workplace outcomes. Therefore the last two hypotheses to be tested are:

H_{1.14}: *PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work performance*

H_{1.15} *PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work attitudes.*

3.8 Chapter summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter commenced with an overview of the contemporary theories pertaining to happiness, wellbeing and positivity and their relationship to humour generally. It then examined Positive Psychology, Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), Positive Organisational Scholarships (POS) and the construct Psychological Capital (PsyCap). Relationships between humour and each of the PsyCap components were examined and the conceptual possibility of humour as an indicator of PsyCap was investigated. In addition, workplace outcomes benefiting from developing employee PsyCap attributes were explored mirroring the workplace benefits arising from the appropriate use of positive humour that were detailed in Chapter 2. A possible merging of these two constructs, PsyCap and positive humour, was then discussed.

The theories and empirical studies discussed thus far in this and the previous chapter have guided this current research. They assisted in the development of 15 hypotheses which can be tested with empirical data using a methodology outlines in the next chapter. The data collected will also be used to determine whether or not a relationship exists between positive humour use and the PsyCap attributes exist within the workplaces studied.

As there is an expectation to produce results that may be of practical value in a workplace management context, additional information pertaining to workplace performance, workplace attitudes, the existence or not of a 'fun' climate, and the supervisors' sense of humour, is also to be collected and analysed. Literature relating to these considerations was examined in this and the previous chapter.

Therefore the principle research questions emerging from Chapters 2 and 3, to be addressed through this study, are:

- a) Can the use of positive humour in workplaces enhance employee attitudes and performance?
- b) What is the relationship between PsyCap and its constituent parts (hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism), and a positive humour style?
- c) Can positive humour be considered along with hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism as a worthy addition to the construct PsyCap?
- d) Is there a relationship between positive humour and PsyCap, and work performance and work attitudes?
- e) Are the relationships between the above variables moderated by 'fun climate' at a team level?
- f) Are the relationships between the above variables moderated by the self-assessed sense of humour of each team supervisor?

These general questions were developed into specific hypotheses throughout Chapters 2 and 3. These hypotheses lead Chapter 4 which will also outline the methodology used to undertake the current research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction and overview

An explanation of the rationale for this study, a summary of the relevant literature reviewed, and the development of specific hypotheses to be tested were presented in the previous chapters. The earlier chapters also presented an overview of prior studies, theories and constructs that underpin the current research. This chapter will discuss the research methodology used detailing the participants, procedure, measures and data analysis. The development of the questionnaire used to gather data in workplaces for hypothesis testing, its distribution, data collection, and the measurement and analysis of the collected data in relation to the factors of interest are also addressed.

4.1.1 Hypotheses listing

The hypotheses to be tested in this research are listed below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 A list of hypotheses to be tested

H _{1.1} :	<i>Positive humour is positively related to work performance.</i>
H _{1.2} :	<i>Positive humour is positively related to work attitudes.</i>
H _{1.3} :	<i>The relationship between positive humour and work performance in a work team will be moderated by the level of a 'Fun Climate' within that team.</i>
H _{1.4} :	<i>The relationship between positive humour and work attitude in a work team will be moderated by the level of a 'Fun Climate' within that team.</i>
H _{1.5} :	<i>The relationship between positive humour and work performance within a work team will be moderated by the level of the team's supervisor's sense of humour.</i>

H ₁ .6:	<i>The relationship between positive humour and work attitude within a work team will be moderated by the level of the team's supervisor's sense of humour.</i>
H ₁ .7:	<i>Positive humour is positively related to hope.</i>
H ₁ .8:	<i>Positive humour is positively related to optimism.</i>
H ₁ .9:	<i>Positive humour is positively related to resilience.</i>
H ₁ .10:	<i>Positive humour is positively related to self-efficacy.</i>
H ₁ .11:	<i>Positive humour is positively related to PsyCap.</i>
H ₁ .12:	<i>PsyCap is positively related to work performance.</i>
H ₁ .13:	<i>PsyCap is positively related to work attitudes.</i>
H ₁ .14:	<i>PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work performance.</i>
H ₁ .15:	<i>PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work attitudes.</i>

4.1.2 Data analysis strategy

A mixture of linear regression analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and investigations into the moderating effects on factor relationships by specified influences will be pursued as detailed in Table 4.2, below.

Table 4.2 The analyses methods for testing hypotheses

Hypothesis number	Analysis method or methods.
H _{1.1} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variables <i>Positive Humour</i> and <i>Work Performance</i> .
H _{1.2} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variables <i>Positive Humour</i> and <i>Work Attitude</i> .
H _{1.3} :	Linear regression with the moderator variable <i>Fun Climate</i> having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish <i>Fun Climate</i> as a latent variable.
H _{1.4} :	Linear regression with the moderator variable <i>Fun Climate</i> having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish <i>Fun Climate</i> as a latent variable.
H _{1.5} :	Linear regression with the moderator variable <i>Supervisors' Sense of Humour</i> .
H _{1.6} :	Linear regression with the moderator variable <i>Supervisors' Sense of Humour</i> .
H _{1.7} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> .
H _{1.8} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> .
H _{1.9} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> .
H _{1.10} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> .

H _{1.11} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> .
H _{1.12} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Work Performance</i> .
H _{1.13} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Work Attitude</i> .
H _{1.14} :	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> and <i>Work Performance</i> .
H _{1.15}	Linear regression having first performed a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the latent variable <i>Positive Humour</i> and <i>Work Attitude</i> .

The existing constructs of PsyCap and Humour Style are to be tested to confirm whether or not the collected data loads onto these variables as predicted by the respective instrument developers, Luthans et al., (2007) for PsyCap and Martin et al., (2003) for Humour Styles. This Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be performed using the collected data for both the PsyCap and Humour Style constructs. A new latent variable called ‘Positive Humour’, an aggregate of Martin et al.’s (2003) humour styles termed affiliative and self-enhancing humour, will be tested also using the same CFA methodology. Having established that the affiliative and self-enhancing humour items load successfully onto the new latent variable Positive Humour, it in turn will be tested to ensure it loads onto the construct PsyCap. This is a three-level CFA. Brown (2006, p. 40) reports that a CFA requires ‘a strong empirical or conceptual foundation to guide the specification and evaluation of the factor model.’ As

evidenced from discussions in Chapter 3, especially around the criteria for considering potential PsyCap indicators, this conceptual foundation does exist.

The initial suggestion that humour may be regarded as a potential PsyCap contender comes from Luthans et al., (2007: 165) in which they observe that humour, generally, has a ‘positive social impact, both on the deliverer and the recipient.’ However they also warn of the potential downside in which use of inappropriate humour (negative humour) has been found to ‘repel others, causing social isolation for the deliverer, fear in observers, and reduced group cohesion.’

Further, as PsyCap draws from positive psychology literature, and positive psychology in turn is described by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) as a ‘science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions promises to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless’ it was decided that only positive humour should be pursued in relation to PsyCap through this current study. Given these observations, the differentiation between positive humour and negative humour is paramount to this study, again suggesting that the conceptual foundation stipulated by Brown (2006) as being a requirement for a CFA, is solid.

Additional latent variables of Work Performance, Work Attitude and Fun Climate were identified as being necessary to complete this research as these are workplace measures that may be influenced (and ideally strengthened) by the constructs PsyCap and Positive Humour. Once again these variables are based on a strong ‘conceptual foundation’ with Work Performance relying on each individual’s supervisor assessing that worker’s teamwork, creativity, contribution and discretionary effort; and Work Attitude being a self-report

reflection of an individual's job satisfaction, turnover intention (that is, their intention to remain with, or leave, the organisation) and their attachment to that organisation. Similarly the Fun Climate variable relied on both the individual's and the supervisor's assessment of the workplace culture in regards to how welcome humour was within that workplace. Items rated included 'At my workplace we try and have fun whenever we can', 'Managers encourage employees to have fun' and 'We laugh a lot at my workplace.' All of these variables are higher-order constructs, and thus the commonly accepted procedures recommended by Hinkin (1995) were used to conduct the confirmatory factor analyses.

A set of regression analyses will then test the relationship, if any, involving the newly created constructs Work Performance (WorkPerf), Work Attitude (WorkAtt) with PsyCap, Positive Humour (PosHum) and a combination of these two, and will also test if the existence of a workplace Fun Climate has a moderating effect on these relationships.

Finally, the potential effect that a supervisor's sense of humour may have on the climate experienced by his / her team (i.e. does the workplace enjoy a 'fun climate' or not), and also the moderating effect that the supervisor's sense of humour may have on the relationship between the workplace climate (a fun climate) and work performance (WorkPerf) and work attitude (WorkAtt), will be tested.

4.2 Survey design

All the data used in this study were obtained through the use of self-report survey questionnaires with the exception of supervisors' assessment of individual subordinate's workplace performance measures. This decision was taken after weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of using self-report surveys as the research data source. The use of self-report surveys are inexpensive, a relatively fast way of collecting a lot of data and are easy to interpret as scoring the results is straightforward (Kline, 1993). Despite these strengths, there are a number of weaknesses to consider when using self-reports to measure psychological constructs. Respondents may skew their answers to make themselves look better, or they may even lie. Berenson and Levine (1996) acknowledge that there is no control exercised over the behaviour of those being surveyed, which may be problematical and Schwarz (1999) expresses the view that self-reports are a fallible source of data. Even minor changes in a question's wording, format or context can, according to Schwarz, result in significant changes in the results obtained.

Luthans, et al., (2007, p. 228) also warn of potential biases when using self-report measures. They note that the collection of objective performance data is 'one of the most problematic issues facing organizational behavioural research' when measuring job performance. They suggest that performance measures may be 'not voluntarily made available', highlighting a significant problem with self-reporting. This factor, plus their contention that performance measures may also be too subjective, out-dated or inadequate add to their general concerns over the 'pitfalls in measuring performance.' However, this does not mean that all self-report data are invalid, only that they cannot be trusted in all cases (Ericsson and Simon, 1993). In addition, the collection of data through self-reporting is already prevalent in published

research in organisational behaviour and management (Hosie et al., 2006). It accounts for more than half of the published studies in organisational behaviour and industrial organisational psychology (Sackett and Larson, 1991). Given all these considerations, the decision was taken to proceed with self-report survey questionnaire method, not least because of the observation made by Podsakoff et al., (2003) that using self-report surveys with guaranteed anonymity made responses less vulnerable to social desirability, acquiescence and leniency.

A specific issue of self-report concern was that participants may want to report that they use humour because they want to see themselves as being funny. This was not considered to be a major problem because the Humour Styles Questionnaire is designed to elicit answers about an individual's actual use and preferred 'style' of humour rather than presenting an opportunity for them to exaggerate their 'funniness'.

The possibility of supervisor bias was also considered when planning the current research. Using multiple methods to elicit the necessary information may reduce the effect of such bias (Spector, Fox and Van Katwyk, 1999) but this was not an option given the already large participant burden. In addition, most of the supervisors' questions were based on those used in contemporary performance appraisal instruments. If supervisors' responses were subjectively biased in a performance appraisal context, the ramifications for the employee, the supervisor and the organisation are potentially extremely serious. Given the nature of the current research, it was hoped that supervisors would be as objective in their responses as they would in a formal performance appraisal situation.

Based on the hypotheses emerging from the literature, a 116-item survey questionnaire aimed at individual participants and a complementary 29-item questionnaire for the participating work team's supervisor was prepared. In addition, a 12-item questionnaire for supervisors to provide targeted performance appraisal of each of their subordinates on specific work-related indicators was included. The study used these two survey questionnaires; one for the supervisor of each work team surveyed and one for each member of that work team, hereafter called the 'participant'. Self-report, survey-based questions testing each participant's PsyCap, preferred humour style, job satisfaction, turnover intent, organisational commitment and their rating of the workplace climate in respect to its being a 'fun place to work', were used. In addition, the study also used data from a performance appraisal for each participant completed by their supervisor in respect to the participant's teamwork and helping behaviours, creativity and innovative thinking, discretionary effort and civic virtue, and productivity and organisational effectiveness. Each supervisor also provided their rating of the workplace climate in respect to its being a 'fun place to work'. In addition, the Multidimensional Sense of Humour Score for each team's supervisor is included in the collected data and used to determine what impact, if any, this may have on the relationships between workplace attributes of interest.

Previously established and validated scales were used to measure the constructs of interest from data provided by the individual participants and their supervisors. Data from sections of a widely used performance appraisal questionnaire with appropriate validation were extracted from the supervisors' responses for each participating individual. Table 4.5 details the scales used.

4.2.1 Survey-based methodology detail

The 116-item survey questionnaire was completed by 303 individual participants from 50 Australian work teams. These self-report instruments were complemented by a 29-item questionnaire completed by each participating work team's supervisor. In addition, to completing their own 'self-report', each supervisor then completed a 12-item questionnaire for each of their subordinates participating in this study which rated subordinates' teamwork and helping behaviours; creativity and innovative thinking; discretionary effort and civic virtue; and productivity and contribution to organisational effectiveness. Demographic data relating to gender, age and highest educational achievement were also collected for all participants (both subordinates and supervisors), and information relating to industry sector, organisational size and work-team size was provided by each work-team's supervisor. A suite of survey material was delivered to each participating organisation's nominated work team.

The suite of survey material comprised:

- one copy of the supervisor's booklet
- one copy of Section D of the supervisor's booklet (the section covering the supervisor's assessment of each of their subordinates) for each for the team members participating in the survey
- one copy of the participant's booklet for each of the team members participating in the survey
- sufficient return envelopes for all the above

and a covering letter emphasising the following:

- the voluntary nature of participation and an assurance of confidentiality
- an instruction that the supervisor should not see the individual responses and vice versa
- an assurance that although names were needed on the surveys so individual and supervisors' responses could be matched, these names will be removed and shredded as soon as each batch of returned surveys was coded
- a reassurance that adherence to these procedural matters would assure confidentiality.

Appendix 3 shows the details included in the suite of materials provided to supervisors and participants. Appendix 4 is the individual participants' survey questionnaire and Appendix 5 is the supervisor's questionnaire detailing supervisor's self report questions and those relating to each participating individual's work performance and attitude, to be answered by the relevant supervisor. Items relating to PsyCap are limited to one question from each of the variables (self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism) to comply with copyright restrictions placed on the use of the PsyCap instrument.

4.3 Participants

Eighty-six Australian organisations were initially approached, either in person or by telephone, with a brief explanation of the research project and a request for permission to send a more detailed proposal. These organisations were approached by the researcher from an extensive network known through either a professional relationship or mutual membership of peak professional bodies including the Australian Human Resources Institute, the Public Relations Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Project Management. Although this was a convenience sample sourced through the researcher's personal networks, the

spread of participants by age, educational standard and industry sector was generally reflective of the Australian workforce and not seen to be problematic with the possible exception of females being over-represented in the sample.

The 86 organisations initially approached were selected to ensure that the public sector (national, state and local government), the private sector and the not-for-profit sector were all represented as key components of Australia's contemporary workforce. The representation distribution from each of these sectors is shown below in Table 4.3. For ease of access, 90 per cent of these organisations were located in southern Tasmania with the other 10 per cent being from regional Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. Again this was a convenience sample chosen because of the proximity of the participating work teams to the researcher. However there was no reason to believe that the prevalence of Tasmanian workplaces chosen would be significantly different to those from other Australian states. Sixty-nine organisations responded positively to the initial request and were sent a detailed proposal letter. Eight of these organisations did not respond to the letter and, after one reminder telephone call, were dropped off the list, leaving 61 organisations to which the full suite of surveys were either sent or delivered personally. Of the 61 organisations provided with surveys, 54 returned completed sets but of these only 50 organisations followed the instructions precisely and these were included in the final analysis. The 50 teams used in the final analysis comprised a total of 290 individual participants ($n=290$) – an average of 5.8 members in each team surveyed.

4.3.1 Demographic detail

Table 4.3 The demographic composition of the survey participants

	Gender (N)	Age (N)	Education (N)	Sector (N)
Male	81 (28%)			
Female	209 (72%)			
20 or under		8 (2.8%)		
21-30 years		58 (20%)		
31-40 years		71(24.5%)		
41-50 years		74 (25.5%)		
51-60 years		59 (20.3%)		
61 years and over		20 (6.9%)		
Did not complete year 10			2 (0.6%)	
High school to year 10			26 (9%)	
High school to years 11 and 12			58 (20%)	
TAFE College			68 (23.4%)	
University Bachelor			109 (37.6%)	
University Masters			23 (8%)	
University Doctorate			4 (1.4%)	
Public sector employee				125 (43.1%)
Private sector employee				130 (44.8%)
Not-for-profit sector employee				35 (12.1%)
TOTALS (N=290)	290	290	290	290

Although it is not a focus of this research, gender, age and education may have an influence on some of the correlations between the variables of interest. These considerations present opportunities for future research; for example, whether gender or generational differences influence these relationships. The over-representation of females in the current research is accidental, merely reflecting the composition of the participating teams that were selected for their convenient accessibility with no consideration given to their gender make-up. However, research has found that trends exist in the types of people who respond to surveys. This research found that more educated and more affluent people are more likely to participate in surveys than less educated and less affluent people and also that women are more likely to participate than men (Curtin, Presser and Singer, 2000). This tendency may account for some of the sample characteristics in the current research.

4.4 Procedure

The survey preamble explained the purpose of the study and emphasised that participation was purely voluntary with an ‘opt-out’ option available at any time without prejudice or penalty (see Appendix 3). This introduction clearly explained the expectations of the project and the participants’ role in the study. It detailed the structure of the questionnaire and a realistic expectation of the time required for completion. It also made participants aware that the study should not involve any physical or mental discomfort. It clearly stated that if participants found any question to be invasive or offensive, they were free to omit answering that question or cease their participation in the study. It also mentioned the availability of counselling services should these be required.

4.4.1 Confidentiality

The confidential nature of the study and the security of data collected was explained to all participants. Coding of each batch of returns was necessary to link individual participants with their appropriate supervisors. This was achieved through a matrix that was only accessible to the researcher. All individual names were provided on a cover sheet which was shredded immediately after coding to ensure individual anonymity. Participants were assured that all data was to be coded in a de-identified manner and subsequently analysed and reported in such a way that responses were not able to be linked back to an individual. The names of the participating organisations and the contact person with each organisation are known only to the researcher. These have been stored in accordance with Ethics Committee guidelines.

4.4.2 Ethics approval

This study has been cleared in accordance with the ethical review processes of the University of Tasmania and within the guidelines of the Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics reference number: H0012161).

4.5 Measures

4.5.1 Survey structure

Two existing instruments, the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ-24) and the Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ-20) were used as a primary basis for this research.

The shorter version of the HSQ, using 20 items in lieu of 32 items, was chosen after correspondence with the instrument's co-author, Dr Rod Martin (see Appendices 6 and 7). As the validity of the shorter version was assured, the decision to use this version was made to alleviate an already high respondent burden. No other published research was found reporting the use of the shorter version of the HSQ.

The PCQ-24 and HSQ-20 were augmented by several other instruments addressing specific areas of interest as detailed in Table 4.4 below. Face validity for supervisors is an important consideration for the potential workplace application of the outcomes of this research. It was decided, therefore, to use items from commonly used performance appraisal instruments that were based on empirically sound research. These items were sourced mainly from an appraisal instrument developed and marketed by Aon Hewitt (formally known as Hewitt Associates) to assess indicators enabling the new latent variable Work Performance to be developed.

Table 4.4 Instruments used in the survey

Variable of interest	Scale used	Number of items
PsyCap	PCQ: Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007)	24
Humour style	HSQ-20: Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir (2003)	20
Sense of humour	MSHS: Thorson and Powell (1993)	24
Job satisfaction	Warr, Cook and Wall (1979)	3
Intention to stay / staff turnover	Shore and Martin (1989)	4
Organisational commitment	Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979)	4
Level of fun experience at work	Karl, Peluchette and Harland (2007)	5
Performance indicators: – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teamwork and helping behaviours, • creativity and innovative thinking, • discretionary effort and civic virtue, • productivity and organisational effectiveness. 	<p>Face validity for supervisors was an important consideration in this research. Therefore items used as supervisors' assessment of employee performance were sourced from employee performance appraisal instruments developed and marketed by Aon Hewitt (formally known as Hewitt Associates), a human capital and management consulting service headquartered in Lincolnshire, United States; and the United States Office of Personnel Management Planning and Policy Analysis (www.FedView.opm.gov).</p> <p>Academic sources from which these items used were sourced or cross-referenced by the researcher include teamwork and helping behaviours (Nash and Korte, 1997), creativity and innovative thinking (Rank et al., 2004), discretionary effort and civic virtue, (Brown and Leigh, 1996; Morrison and Phelps, 1999; Podsakoff et al., 1990), productivity and organisational effectiveness (Hosie et al., 2006).</p>	12

4.5.2 PsyCap (PCQ-24)

Luthans et al., (2007) devised a composite construct made up of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy which they termed Psychological Capital (PsyCap). This construct suggests that successful organisations and leaders rely on a number of factors for their success. These factors are interrelated and mutually supportive constructs that meet specific criteria including being state-like (and thus capable of further development); measurable and have demonstrable impacts on workplace performance. They also have theoretical and empirical research supporting them.

The original PsyCap questionnaire published in Luthans et al., (2007) consisted of 24 items (PCQ-24). Before its publication, PCQ-24 underwent a comprehensive psychometric analysis using sample data across a range of industry sectors and cultures (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2010). A way to address concerns raised by repeated measures is to keep the number of survey questions to a minimum, primarily for longitudinal studies (Avey et al., 2008). The 24-item PsyCap questionnaire (PCQ) was subsequently reduced to 12 items, the PCQ-12, however the PCQ-24 was used in the current study. The PCQ-12 consists of three items from each of ‘self-efficacy’ and ‘resilience’, four covering ‘hope’ and two addressing ‘optimism’ and has been ‘demonstrated in a number of samples to have acceptable reliability and support for construct validity’

A review of subsequent studies showed the use of PCQ-24 was still widespread (Chen and Lim, 2012) so that was adopted for this study although the 12 items comprising PCQ-12 (Avey et al., 2008) were ultimately used for the following Confirmatory Factor Analysis (see Chapter 4.7). Using the PCQ-24 instrument, participants select the degree to which they agree with each of the 24 items using a seven-point Likert Scale.

The Cronbach alphas for PCQ-24 reported by Luthans et al., (2007a) demonstrated reliability for PsyCap and its subscales, with the exception of one out of four samples for both optimism (0.69) and resilience (0.66). These were marginally under the generally accepted level of internal consistency (0.70).

4.5.3 Humour Style (HSQ-20)

A shortened version (HSQ-20) of Martin et al.'s (2003) original Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ-32) was used to alleviate respondent burden (See 4.5.1). This questionnaire was developed to measure four identified styles of humour:

- affiliative humour (in which one laughs and jokes with friends and colleagues)
- aggressive humour (in which one laughs and jokes at the expense of others – usually in an attempt to belittle or demean them)
- self-enhancing humour (in which one attempts to cheer oneself with uplifting self-focused humour to help change perspective or counter stressors)
- self-defeating humour (in which one uses negative self-directed humour at one's own expense, or allows or encourages others to use negative humour toward them at their expense).

Using this questionnaire, participants select the degree to which they agree with each of the 20 items using a seven-point Likert Scale. The statistics for the short form of the HSQ (HSQ-20) were provided by Dr Rod Martin in an email to the researcher dated 17 June 2011. A copy of this correspondence and internal consistency details are included in Appendices 6 and 7 respectively.

4.5.4 Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS)

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2.2, Thorson and Powell (1993) developed and validated a self-report instrument, the Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS), to evaluate a person's sense of humour. The MSHS identified and addressed humour creativity, humour appreciation, the appreciation of humorous people and as an aid to coping. The MSHS is an assessment of an individual's own behaviours in relation to humour and their attitude toward humour (Thorson et al., 1997).

Although the 24 items from the MSHS were used in both the individual participants' and the team supervisors' questionnaires, only the responses provided by the supervisors were used in the final analysis. Each of the 24 items in the MSHS is scored using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = moderately agree and 5 = strongly agree. Six of the items were negatively phrased and were reversed when scoring.

4.5.5 Job satisfaction, intention to stay and organisational commitment as an important cluster of employees' work attitudes

Job satisfaction, intention to stay and organisational commitment are interrelated. However they have a key conceptual distinction in that job satisfaction and organisational commitment are 'attitudes' held by an employee. Turnover is regarded as a behaviour, whereas intention to stay (or leave the organisation) is either an attitude or a behavioural intent. Job satisfaction was measured using three items from the 15-item instrument developed by Warr et al., (1979) while the four items used to measure employee turnover intentions (or conversely, intentions to stay) were based on those used by Shore and Martin (1989). An instrument to measure job satisfaction – the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) was also developed by Spector (1985). This

was a 36-item questionnaire specifically developed to meet a perceived need in the human service sector including public and not-for-profit organisations. As this current study is aimed at a more general workforce, the use of questions from the Warr et al., (1979) instrument were favoured.

Shore and Martin's (1989) study focused on job satisfaction and organisational commitment in relation to employee work performance and their turnover intentions. Both job satisfaction and organisational commitment are related to turnover intentions but of these, organisational commitment is associated more strongly with turnover intentions than is job satisfaction. Actual turnover is more difficult to predict than intentions because of the many factors that influence turnover behaviour (Shore and Martin, 1989). In addition, individual intentions to stay with an organisation are important indicators of the general morale of the organisation as well as being a specific indicator of turnover (Mowday et al., 1982).

Four organisational commitment items were sourced from the 15-item Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979; Angle and Perry, 1981). This uses a five-point Likert Scale (Strongly disagree / Disagree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree / Strongly agree). The OCQ had acceptable psychometric properties and that this instrument has been used extensively in research (Allan and Meyer, 1990).

Job satisfaction was measured using a three-item survey (Warr, Cook and Wall, 1979) with a six-point Likert Scale (Strongly disagree / Disagree / Somewhat disagree / Somewhat agree / Agree / Strongly agree). The participant's intention to stay with their organisation was determined by asking four questions about the degree of their intentions to leave (or stay

with) their current organisation within the next year and then combining these responses into an index. This procedure was based on similar measures used by Lyons (1968).

4.5.6 Fun Climate

The degree to which each individual and each work team reported the level of fun experienced in their work environment was measured using five items developed by Karl, Peluchette and Harland (2007). The instrument, the *Level of fun experienced at work* uses a five-point Lickert Scale (Strongly disagree / Disagree/ Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree / Strongly agree).

4.5.7 Team work, creativity, contribution and discretionary effort as an important cluster of employees' work performance

For the purposes of this study, work performance is to be assessed by an employee's demonstrated teamwork; their creativity and innovation; the contribution they make to the organisation and the discretionary effort expended by the employee above and beyond the employer's expectations. These work performance indicators were discussed in Chapter 2.4.2. Items seeking a supervisors' assessment of these work performance indicators were chosen initially from a commercially available Hewitt Associates Inc (2009) performance appraisal package. Specific items used in this appraisal instrument were either influenced by, or sourced from, the following studies. Teamwork and helping behaviours (Nash and Korte, 1997); creativity and innovative thinking (Rank et al., 2004); discretionary effort and civic virtue (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Brown and Leigh, 1996; Morrison and Phelps, 1999). Items seeking supervisors' assessment of participants' productivity and organisational effectiveness were sourced from Hosie et al., (2006).

4.6 Data analysis approach

This research used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a type of SEM dealing specifically with measurement models showing relationships between observed measures (indicators) and latent variables (factors). Unlike the measures that are observed and recorded, ‘latent’ or hidden variables are those which can be inferred through mathematical modelling using the directly observed and measured variables. CFA is an analytical tool used to validate a ‘construct’ which is a theoretical concept. Because CFAs account for measurement error they are regarded as providing stronger evidence of validity than traditional methods. Floyd and Widaman (1995) report that SEM and CFA are the most commonly used methods when developing and evaluating psychological measures, especially when multi-item measures are being considered. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to examine the structure of latent variables using the software package *Mplus* Version 7 (Muthén and Muthén, 1998-2012). Simple linear regressions were also calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 (1989 – 2012).

Null hypothesis testing, wherein statistical significance criteria is applied, is the foundation SEM. *Mplus* has become one of the most widely used latent-variable programs for research in the social and behavioural sciences because it includes a wealth of features, is commercially available and does not include restrictions common for research licences (Rupp, Templin and Henson, 2010). Using *Mplus* the model is tested against the obtained measurement data to determine how well the model fits the data.

SPSS was developed in 1968 to simplify otherwise difficult analytical tasks through enhanced usability and data access, and to enable more people to benefit from the use of

quantitative techniques in their decision-making processes (Nie et al., 1975). The program was developed out of the need to quickly analyse large volumes of social science data gathered through a variety of research methods.

4.6.1. Model fit

A number of model fit indices exist allowing a researcher to determine the suitability of the model generated for supporting or not supporting the hypothesis being tested. Among those most commonly used are the chi-square index, and the incremental fit indices. The former, chi-square is described by Davis and Pecar (2010) as a popular distribution used to assess the significance of a model to the sample data – otherwise known as ‘goodness-of-fit’. However, as sample sizes and model complexity increases, researchers are encouraged to use other indices as well as the chi-square test. One of these is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) which is an approximate fit index indicating how well the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter estimates, would fit the population’s covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). Hooper et al., (2008) suggested that RMSEA has become regarded as ‘one of the most informative fit indices’ in recent years and reported that recommendations for RMSEA cut-off points have been reduced considerably in the last fifteen years.

An RMSEA in the range of 0.05 to 0.10 was considered an indication of a ‘fair fit’ and that values above 0.10 indicated ‘poor fit’, up until the early 1990s (MacCallum et al., 1996). This range was revised to suggest that an RMSEA in the range of 0.08 to 0.10 provided a ‘mediocre fit’ and below 0.08 was a ‘good fit’. More recently, cut-off values have been further reduced with Hu and Bentler (1999) suggesting an upper value close to 0.06. The

closer to zero than the RMSEA is, the better well-fitted the model is and a general consensus appears to suggest that the upper limit be less than 0.08 to be 'good'.

The comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are the other commonly used 'goodness-of-fit' indices which examine the degree to which the tested model accounts for variance between the data being tested and a baseline model. For a reasonable model fit, the fit index should be at least 0.95 (Hu and Bentler, 1999) although values of 0.90 – 0.95 may be indicative of an acceptable model fit (Brown, 2006).

The other commonly used index is the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). SRMR values range from 0 to 1.0 with values of up to 0.08 suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) as being acceptable. To determine an adequate model fit, Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest that the cut-off recommendations stated above should be met by two or three indices. This 'combinational rule' is applied throughout the current study.

4.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As a first step, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed using the collected data for both the PsyCap and Humour Style constructs and then for the latent variables labelled Work Performance, Work Attitude and Fun Climate. As these are all higher-order constructs, commonly accepted procedures recommended by Hinkin (1995) were used. Brown (2006, p. 72) suggests a minimum of three indicators per latent variable is recommended and further, (pp. 145 – 149) discusses preferred methods for reporting on CFAs. The use of multiple indices was recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Brown (2006). It was decided to use chi-square (χ^2) as a fundamental measure of overall fit, along with the standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR); the comparative fit index (CFI); the Tucker-Lewis index

(TLI); and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). In CFA these ‘goodness-of-fit’ statistics provide different pieces of information about how well the parameters of the factor model are able to reproduce the sample correlations. Factor variances were set to 1 to enable model identification during the estimation process. The significance level (α) chosen for this current study is 0.05 (5%) which is high and may result in a greater probability of Type 1 or Type 2 errors occurring and thus incorrect conclusions being reached. Type 1 errors occur due to the analysed data coming from a ‘sample’ and not the entire population, and thus results could differ if a different set of samples were analysed. Type 2 errors result from an insufficient sample size. The higher the sample size, the less likelihood there is for Type 2 error. Choosing a significance level (α) of 0.05 indicates that the chance of arriving at specific outcome, even if the claimed correlation is true, is five per cent. Lower percentages of ‘chance’ findings are also used in contemporary research although significance levels of 0.05 are common. This is an acknowledged limitation of the current research and suggests that the regressions reported in this thesis could be re-run within more stringent parameters.

This methodology has been used for reporting results in this research. Initially, to establish a base-line for ensuring the suitability of the model, ‘goodness-of-fit’ indices recommended by Brown (2006, pp. 81 - 88) were used. Reference was also made to Hu and Bentler (1999) who stated that a good fit was present when the CFI was > 0.96 ; RMSEA < 0.08 and SRMR is < 0.09 , not greatly dissimilar to the parameters identified by Brown (2006).

Brown (2006, p. 86) further notes that there is little consensus in published books and journal articles on what cut off criteria should be applied to indicate good (or poor) model fit. The chi-square (χ^2) test is always testing the null hypothesis, specifically determining that there is no significant difference between the expected and observed results, and as Brown (2006, p

81) suggests, the chi-square (χ^2) test is the ‘classic’ goodness-of-fit index. The numerical criteria used in this study are presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 – Testing criteria to be used for data analysis

Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	CFI	TFI	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)
Critical value (alpha value) is always > 0.05	0 indicates a perfect fit; values very close to 0 suggest a good model fit. 0.08 to 0.10 provide a ‘mediocre fit’ and below 0.08 was a ‘good fit’. For this study 0.08 and under was used.	CFI values from 0.9 to 0.95 may be indicative of an acceptable model fit.	TFI values from 0.9 to 0.95 may be indicative of an acceptable model fit.	0 indicates a perfect fit; values very close to 0 suggest a good model fit. 0.08 and under used.

4.8 Linear regressions

Linear regressions were performed to test the hypotheses developed in Chapters 2 and 3 and listed in Table 4.1 at the beginning of this chapter. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 (1989 – 2012) software was used to perform the linear regressions. SPSS provides a simple and effective way to predict the value of a variable based on the value of another variable, as well as offering easy-to read reports based on the test results enabling meaningful interpretations to be formulated. Testing results are reported in Chapter 5 with resultant tables and graphs presented in Appendix 10.

4.9 Within group inter-rater reliability analysis

Before using the collected ‘fun climate’ data to test for its possible effect on the relationships between Positive Humour, and Work Performance and Work Attitude respectively, a within group reliability analysis was performed. The overall climate of a work team is a synthesis of how each individual views the climate in which they work and some consistency of these individual responses is required to form an agreed evaluation of that climate. See also Chapter 2.4.3.

In this study assessments of workplaces as a ‘fun place to work’ (i.e. having a ‘fun climate’ or not) is considered at both an individual level and at a team level. The ‘fun climate’ effect on workplace productivity considerations are explored for all teams in which there is a consensus within that team that such a climate exists. To achieve this, specific testing of the data to assess the ‘within group’ reliability is performed. The groups for which there is no agreement on scoring for a ‘fun climate’ are eliminated for the specific subsequent analyses relying on the ‘fun climate’ construct. The data used for this reliability analysis is shown in Appendix 11.

An organisation’s climate basically consists of shared perceptions (Ashforth, 1985). The consideration of an organisation’s climate as a shared experience suggests that a group analysis of the concept of a ‘fun climate’ within the work teams investigated in this research, would be more meaningful than using individual responses independently. Assessing the degree to which individuals within a group agree or disagree on their rating of a single target, is problematic for researchers (Lindell et al., 1999). In the current research the ‘single target’ was the climate of the organisation as characterised by five questions specifically addressing the individual rater’s perception of their workplace as a ‘fun’ place in which to work.

James, Demaree and Wolf (1984) developed an index to address this difficulty. The r_{wg} index measures agreement on a single-item scale: a within-group inter-rater reliability statistic. It evaluates the degree of consensus or agreement among individual raters within a group or team and was used to further this current study. The initial linear regressions investigating the degree to which a 'fun climate' may have had a moderating effect on the relationship between the positive humour and work performance, and positive humour and work attitude were performed using the entire data base.

That is, all the individual responses to the four 'fun climate' questions were totalled and used (FC) within the formulae:

$$WP = i + b1(PH) + b2(FC) = b3(PH*FC) + e \quad \text{and}$$

$$WA = i + b1(PH) + b2(FC) = b3(PH*FC) + e$$

where WP = the dependent variable Work Performance

WA = the dependent variable Work Attitude

PH = Positive Humour

FC = Fun Climate

i = the intercept

b1 = the effect of PH on WP (or WA respectively)

b2 = the effect of FC on WP (or WA respectively)

b3 = the effect of PH x FC on WP (or WA respectively)

Using a Microsoft Excel Macro developed by Lemoine (2013) all individual responses to four of the five 'fun climate' questions were regrouped into their original team structures and analysed to determine the within group inter-rater reliability.

Before the Excel Macro add-on was accepted and used, the underlying formula used on the spreadsheet was compared with that specified by James et al., (1984: p 88) and confirmed to be accurate.

This formula is:

$$r_{wg} = (\sigma_E^2 - S_x^2) / \sigma_E^2 - 1 - (S_x^2 / \sigma_E^2)$$

where r_{wg} = an inter-rater agreement index defined as the proportional reduction in error variance; σ_E^2 = the expected variance and S_x^2 = observed area variance. A uniform distribution of the input data was assumed for this exercise. The appropriate use of this formula was restated by James et al., (1997) after some concerns were raised as to its validity. In restating its purpose, James et al., (1997) emphasised that the r_{wg} index should be used as an indicator of inter-rater agreement, not inter-rater reliability.

Using the r_{wg} index and its recommended 0.70 cut-off criterion, the data were analysed and four teams were eliminated on the basis of insufficient agreement on whether or not their workplace could be labelled as having a ‘fun climate’. This analysis is shown in Appendix 11 in which the teams not reaching the recommended level of agreement (i.e. team numbers 7, 21, 53 and 64) are highlighted. Subsequent analyses investigating the moderating effect of a fun climate on workplace performance and attitude used the truncated data base without the teams for whom there was unacceptable within group inter-rater agreement.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results

This chapter will cover the data analysis strategy and end with a summary of the results. The data was initially screened to ensure there were no missing values. Of the 54 returned sets of completed surveys, only 50 organisations followed the instructions precisely and therefore these were the only teams to be included in the final analysis. There was evidence of employees' data with no matching supervisor's assessment and vice versa which rendered four sets of team responses unusable. Using the recommendation that no variable had missing data in excess of five per cent (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2008) the remaining data was tested. The missing data analysis revealed an average of 0.06% across the data set and the missing values were inserted with estimations using the mean substitution method (Schwab, 2005) to ensure continuous variables existed for the remaining participants.

The data analysis strategy was to initially perform a series of Confirmatory Factor Analyses to test the models for the constructs of interest, followed by the linear regression analyses to test the hypotheses. The within group inter-rater reliability analysis was conducted on the 'fun climate' variable before the effect of this climate on the relationships between Positive Humour and Work Performance, and Positive Humour and Work Attitude were tested.

The results of all analyses are discussed below with the detailed information presented in Appendix 10 and cross-referenced in the descriptions which follow in this chapter.

5.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

5.1.1 CFA - PsyCap

The initial CFA was performed using the 12 items from PCQ-12; three each for the constructs self-efficacy and resilience, four items for hope and two for optimism. The model fit information, from *Mplus*, is shown below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Model fit for PsyCap (including Item 7)

	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	CFI	TFI	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)
Value Degrees of Freedom P-value	162.598 50 0.0000	0.088	0.910	0.881	0.064

With the RMSEA and TFI being outside the preferred range (see Table 4.5), it was concluded that this was not a good model fit. Further investigation indicated that the data from Item 7 (one of the four items selected to load onto the ‘hope’ construct), was not consistent with the parameters suggested. This item, *If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it* was removed and the model retested. When compared to the other three items in this construct which clearly address the participants’ view of their workplace success and goal-achievement, it appears that this item may not have ‘belonged’ as obviously as the other three items onto the same variable – in this case ‘Hope’. Thus it was not surprising that Item 7 did not load to the same degree on that variable.

Avey et al., (2008) selected 12 from the original 24 PCQ items; namely three items from each of ‘self-efficacy’ and ‘resilience’, four covering ‘hope’ and two only addressing ‘optimism’. Removing Item 7 left three ‘hope’ items for this analysis. The tabulated results from repeating the CFA without item 7 (from *Mplus*) are shown below in Table 5.2.

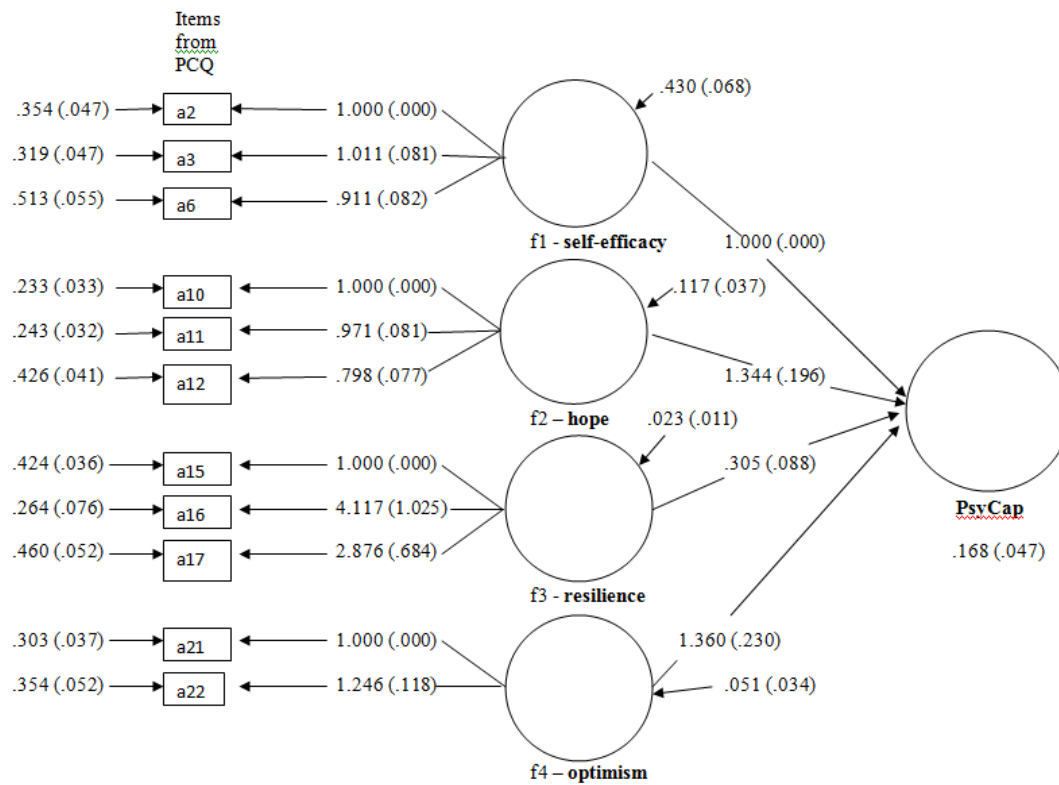
Table 5.2 - Model fit for PsyCap (excluding Item 7)

	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	CFI	TFI	SRMR
Value	103.284	0.074	0.942	0.921	0.054
Degrees of Freedom	40				
P-value	0.0000				

The χ^2 statistic for model fit is 103.284 which is large enough to reject the null hypothesis indicating that the model is a good fit to the data. The ‘degrees of freedom’ for this calculation is 40. Using the criteria stipulated in Table 4.3, the RMSEA of 0.074; CFI of 0.942; TFI of 0.921 and SRMR of 0.054 all indicate a good fit. These goodness of fit indicators imply that this is a reasonable model on which to base the further analysis.

Figure 5.1 (from *Mplus* - below) diagrammatically shows the two-level PsyCap CFA using the modified PCQ-12 model, that is, without Item 7. The original numbering sequence assigned by Luthans et al., (2007) for each item within the original PCQ-24 instrument has been retained in this figure for clarity of future item identification. That is, a2, a3, a6 etc. represent PCQ-24 items 2, 3, and 6 etc. respectively.

Figure 5.1- Path diagram for PsyCap CFA testing (without item 7)



This path diagram summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis model and presents the factor loadings with the standard errors shown in brackets

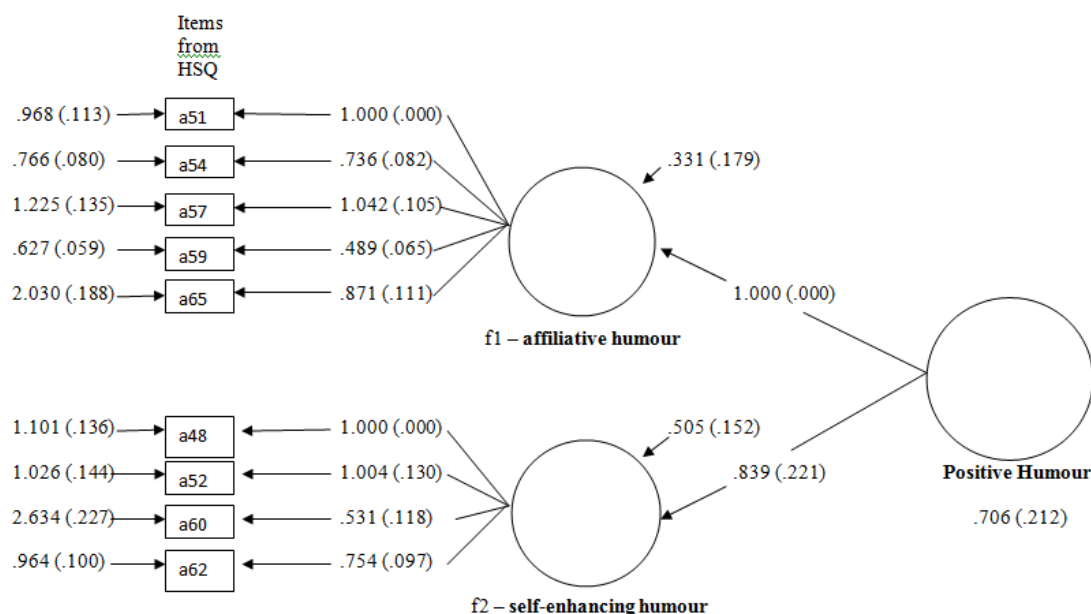
Figure 5.1 shows the loading of each item onto its respective variable (f1=self-efficacy; f2=hope; f3=resilience; f4=optimism). The unconstrained loadings are all statistically significant at the .05 level with ranges from 0.798 to 4.117. These variables in turn load onto the higher-level construct (PsyCap) although f3 (resilience) = 0.305 does not do so strongly relative to the other variables of hope, self-efficacy and optimism.

5.1.2 CFA – Humour Styles

The initial CFAs were performed using the 20 items from Martin et al.'s (2003) original HSQ-32; five items each for the humour styles identified as 'affiliative' and 'self-defeating', four items for the humour style identified as 'self-enhancing' and six items for the humour

style identified as ‘aggressive’. These in turn were analysed to determine if they would load onto two new latent variables, PosHum (positive humour - comprising affiliative and self-enhancing humour styles) and NegHum (negative humour - comprising aggressive and self-defeating humour styles). This is shown diagrammatically below in Figure 5.2 below where the loadings of all items onto the four humour styles are shown. Each of these styles then loads on to either Positive Humour or Negative Humour respectively. All analyses beyond this point focus on the Positive Humour variable only.

Figure 5.2 – Path diagram for Humour Style CFA testing



This path diagram summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis model and presents the factor loadings with the standard errors shown in brackets

Figure 5.2 shows the loading of each item onto its respective variable (f1=affiliative humour; f2=self-enhancing humour; f3=aggressive humour; f4=self-defeating humour). The unconstrained loadings are mostly statistically significant at the .05 level with ranges from 0.489 to 1.836. These variables in turn load onto the higher-level constructs [pos_h (positive

humour) and neg_h (negative humour)] at statistically significant levels. The model fit information, from *Mplus*, is shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 – Model fit information for Positive and Negative Humour Styles

	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	CFI	TFI	SRMR
Value	369.972	0.065	0.807	0.778	0.072
Degrees of Freedom	160				
P-value	0.0000				

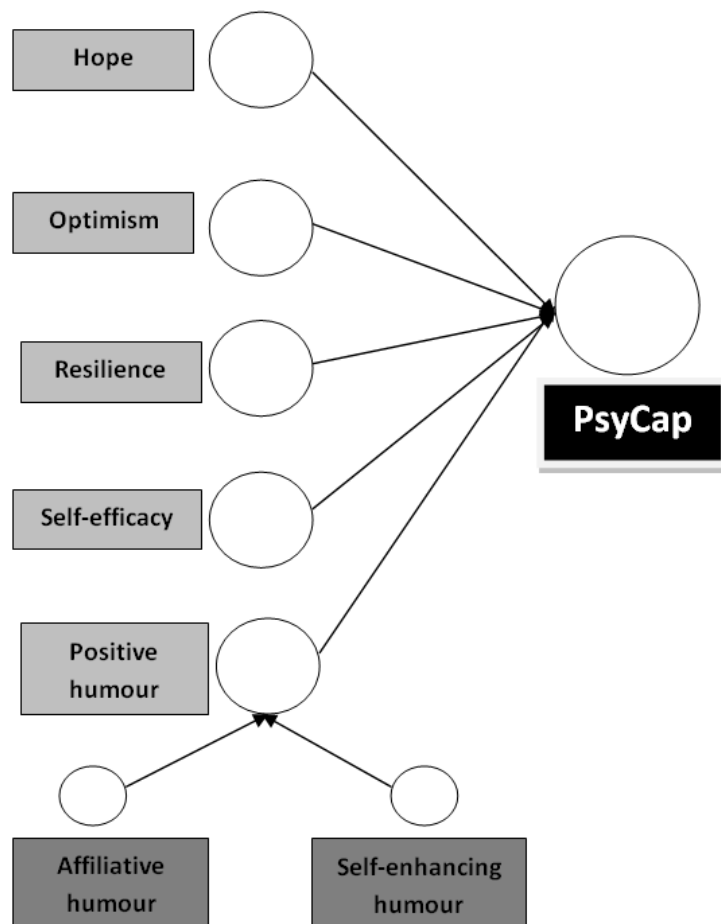
This data is not consistent with the target parameters shown in Table 4.5. The RMSEA is acceptable but the CFI and TFI indices are lower than the parameters recommended by Brown (2006). However, the other two indices were consistent. Considering the individual loadings onto the four humour styles, and in turn the loadings on to the two latent variable PosHum and NegHum, an interesting pattern emerges. Appendix 10.1 shows how the data fits with the two ‘positive’ humour styles labelled by Martin et al. (2003) as ‘affiliative’ and ‘self-enhancing’. This fit is both conceptual and statistical. The concept that the four humour styles could be grouped into the two variables which this current research refers to as ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ humour, is supported by (Martin et al. 2003) who make identical groupings which they label ‘healthy and unhealthy’ and ‘adaptive and maladaptive’ respectively. Appendix 10.1 details the statistical fit of Martin et al.’s (2003) four dimensions of humour, into the two newly labelled variables, ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ humour.

5.1.3 CFA – PsyCap including Humour Styles

The CFAs for PsyCap and Humour Styles individually showed acceptable loadings of items and groups of items onto their respective variables. The data were tested to determine whether or not positive humour might load onto PsyCap along with hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy.

As PsyCap is based on Positive Psychology, only the humour styles loading on to Positive Humour are included on the model to be tested as shown diagrammatically in Figure 5.3 below.

Figure 5.3 – The model for PsyCap, including Positive Humour, testing

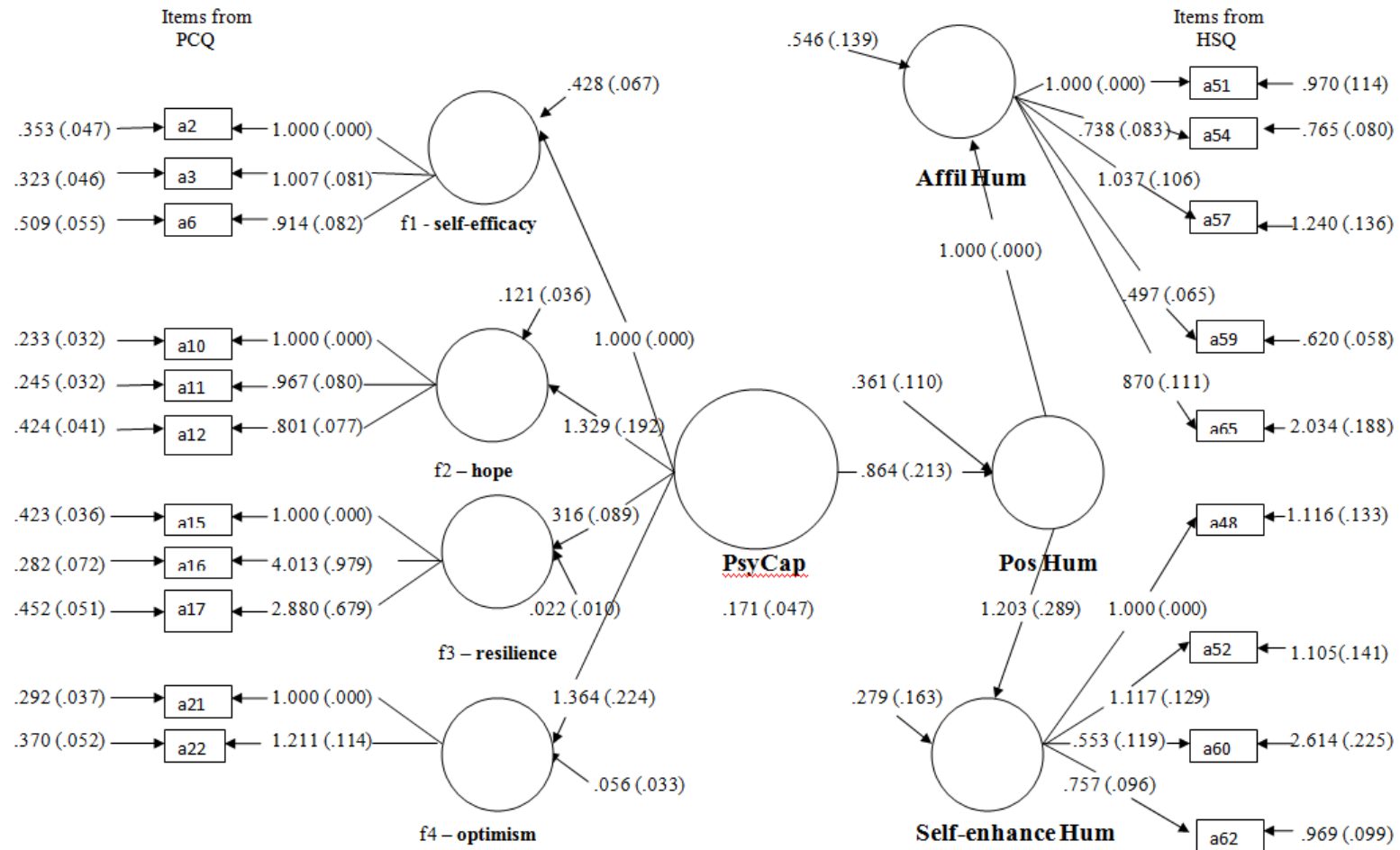


This is a three-level analysis or a higher-order factor structure. The individual items are loaded on to their respective variables (level 1). For the humour data set, the variables are then loaded onto a higher-level variable, Positive Hum (level 2), and finally the third level of the analysis attempts to load the higher-level humour variable (positive humour) along with the individual PsyCap elements (hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy) onto the PsyCap construct.

Figure 5.4 (below) shows the results of testing this model. Positive humour (labelled pos_h on this diagram) is shown loading onto the higher-level latent variable PsyCap along with the psychological capital elements self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism. The lower-level humour variables are labelled in accordance with each humour style; affiliative (affil) and self-enhancing (self-enhance).

Testing this model shows that with f1 (self-efficacy) set as a baseline to a value of 1 to test this model, the other variables load either more or less strongly onto the latent variable PsyCap. With the database being tested, these relationships are: optimism (1.364– that is a stronger loading), hope (1.329 – also a stronger loading), positive humour (0.864 – not as strong as self-efficacy but still a positive loading) and resilience (0.316 – again not as strong as the self-efficacy baseline or any of the other variables.) Overall, positive humour loaded onto the latent variable PsyCap more strongly than did resilience.

Figure 5.4 Path diagram with results of structural model of PsyCap including Positive Humour



This path diagram summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis model and presents the factor loadings with the standard errors shown in brackets

The model fit information from *Mplus* is shown below in Table 5.4

Table 5.4 – Model fit information for PsyCap including Positive Humour Style

	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	RMSEA	CFI	TFI	SRMR
Value	771.078	0.053	0.846	0.831	0.077
Degrees of Freedom	424				
P-value	0.0000				

Using the criteria stipulated in Table 4.5, (χ^2), RMSEA and SRMR are all within the target thresholds whereas CFI and TFI fall just below the recommended lower limit of 0.9. The ‘goodness of fit’ of this model is marginal but adequate. The resultant data from the *MPlus* testing of this model is shown in Appendix 10.2.

5.1.4 CFAs for outcome variables

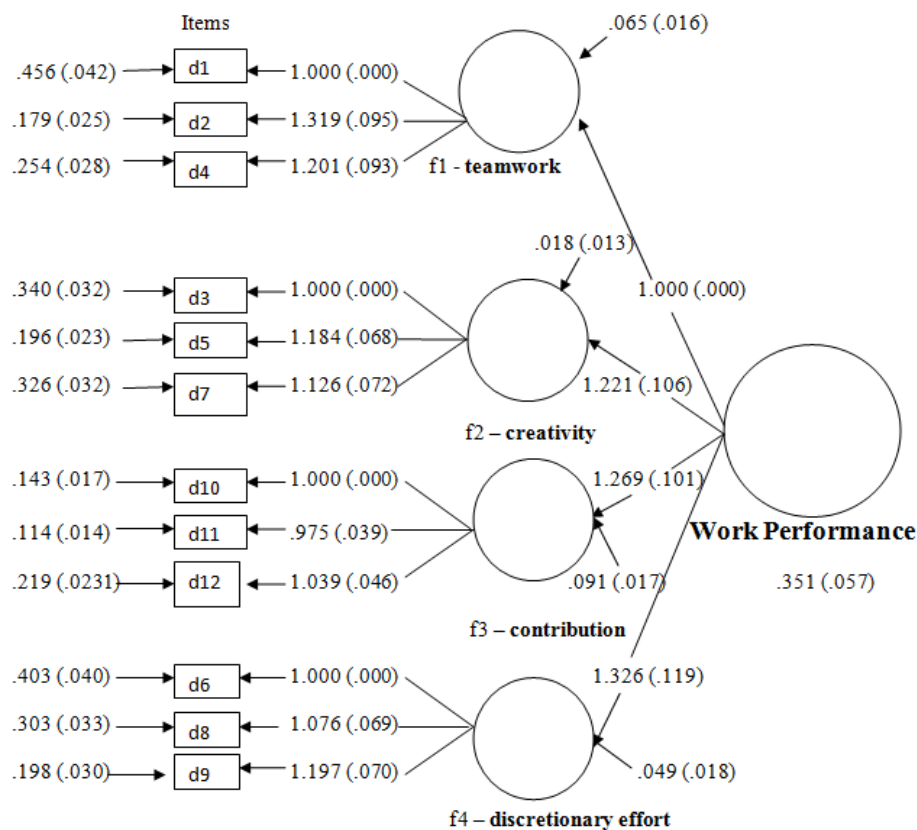
In order to examine the relationship between humour and workplace performance and attitudes and the moderating effect a ‘fun climate’ may have on these, three further latent variables were examined using CFAs.

The first two of these variables were labelled by the researcher ‘Work Performance’ (WorkPerf) and ‘Work Attitudes’ (WorkAtt) respectively. Finally, the degree to which the relationship between these two latent variables and PosHum is moderated by the workplace climate, specifically whether or not it is a fun-filled climate, necessitated the development of the last latent variable labelled ‘Fun Climate’ (FunClim).

5.1.4.1 CFA - Work performance

Work performance comprised the supervisors' responses to a 12-item questionnaire covering each participating employee's teamwork (three items), creativity (three items), contribution (three items) and discretionary effort (three items). These in turn were tested to ensure each loaded onto the new latent variable Work Performance. Model results are shown diagrammatically in Figure 5.5 (below) in which f1=teamwork, f2 = creativity, f3 = contribution and f4 =discretionary effort.

Figure 5.5 – Path diagram of structural model for Work Performance



This path diagram summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis model and presents the factor loadings with the standard errors shown in brackets.

The model fit information from *Mplus* is shown below in Table 5.5. Although the RMSEA was greater than that recommended for a good model fit (0.08), the other indices were within recommended ranges so the model was deemed acceptable. The data used for this model also lay within the expected parameters. The resultant data from the *MPlus* testing of this model is shown in Appendix 10.3.

Table 5.5 - Model fit information for Work Performance

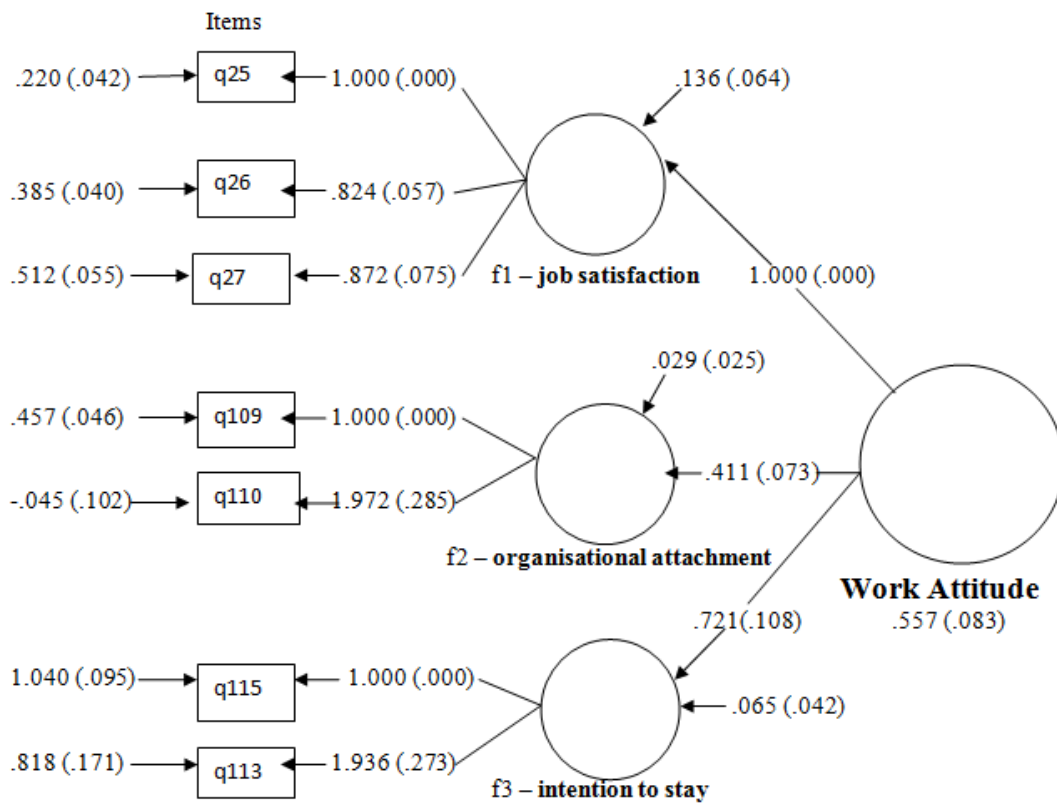
	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	RMSEA	CFI	TFI	SRMR
Value Degrees of Freedom P-value	256.542 50 0.0000	0.119	0.937	0.917	0.039

5.1.4.2 CFA - Work Attitude

Similarly, the new latent variable Work Attitudes (WorkAtt) was developed and tested using items that addressed workplace attitudes of job satisfaction, turnover intention (measured as ‘intention to stay’ in the organisation) and attachment to the organisation. A simple single-level CFA was initially tested using the three items pertaining to each of these attitudes.

The two-level model with three items loading onto job satisfaction, turnover intention and organisational attachment and these in turn loading onto the new latent variable WorkAtt (work attitudes) is shown diagrammatically in Figure 5.6 below, where f1 = job satisfaction, f2 = organisational attachment and f3 = intention to stay.

Figure 5.6 – Path diagram of structural model for Work Attitude



This path diagram summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis model and presents the factor loadings with the standard errors shown in brackets.

Individual items loaded onto the three variables f1 (job satisfaction) and f2 (organisational attachment) and f3 (intention to stay). The subsequent loading onto the higher-level variable Work Attitude was acceptable although organisation attachment was not a strong loading.

The model fit information for this model testing from *Mplus* is shown below in Table 5.6. All but the RMSEA and, marginally, the TFI indices were within the recommended parameters – that is in accordance with those specified in Table 4.5. The resultant data from the *MPlus* testing of this model is shown in Appendix 10.4.

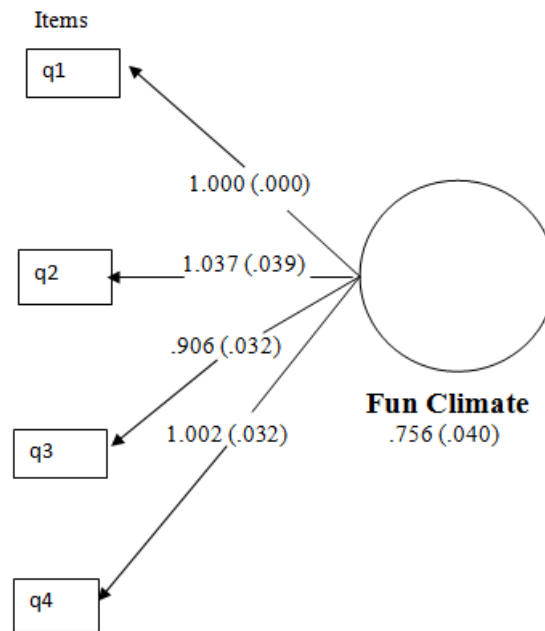
Table 5.6 - Model fit information for Work Attitude

	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	RMSEA	CFI	TFI	SRMR
Value	823.551	0.125	0.935	0.877	0.043
Degrees of Freedom	21				
P-value	0.0000				

5.1.4.3 CFA - Fun Climate

Finally, the new latent variable Fun Climate (FunClim) necessitated a simple single-stage CFA investigating four items only. This is acceptable as the rules observed at the outset using Brown (2006, p. 72), suggested a minimum of three indicators per latent variable. Each unrestricted item loaded strongly onto the new latent variable FunClim, as shown in Figure 5.7 below. Questionnaire items 92 to 95 from the survey instrument (see Appendix 4, Section F) are respectively labelled q1 to q4 in this diagram.

Figure 5.7 – Path diagram of structural model for Fun Climate



This path diagram summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis model and presents the factor loadings with the standard errors shown in brackets.

Referring to Table 5.7 (below), a WRMR (Weighted Root Mean Square Residual) value of 0.278 was calculated by *MPlus* for the model fit in lieu of the SRMR. WRMR is not a well-studied fit statistic model but a value of less than 1 is generally regarded as ‘good’.

Table 5.7 - Model fit information for Fun Climate

	Chi squared (χ^2) test of model fit	RMSEA	CFI	TFI	WRMR
Value	2628.195	0.081	0.999	0.996	0.278
Degrees of Freedom	6				
P-value	0.0000				

However, as noted in Chapter 4.8, the concept of a fun climate within a group or team is a shared experience suggesting that this measure should be team-based and used only where there is sufficient agreement by members of that team that such a climate exists.

An r_{wg} process developed by James, Demaree and Wolf (1984) was first used to evaluate the degree of consensus or agreement among individuals within each team. The results of this process are tabulated in Appendix 11. As a result, four teams for which there was insufficient agreement (less than the recommended 0.70 cut-off criterion) were eliminated. This new construct, 'FunClim' was used in the regression analyses which follow to investigate the degree to which a 'fun climate' may have had a moderating effect on specific relationships of interest.

5.2 Regression analysis

Having determined that positive humour data collected during this research loads onto the PsyCap construct by using a CFA, the next step was to investigate the relationship between positive humour and each of the current PsyCap elements (hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy) and their associations with work attitude, work performance and workplace 'fun climate'. Data were analysed using the regression facility from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Nie et al., (1975).

5.2.1 Testing the hypotheses

The hypotheses to be tested are listed in Chapter 4, Table 4.1. Linear regressions were performed and the results are reported below. All the regression analyses reported in this chapter were calculated using the software package IBM-SPSS Version 21 (1989- 2012) and

each labelled table is a composite of three output tables from SPSS. The significance level of α chosen for this current study is 0.05 (5%).

5.2.2 Linear regressions performed

The newly established variables Work Performance, Work Attitude, Fun Climate and the Supervisors' Sense of Humour were all used in the linear regression analyses conducted. Initially the relationship between Positive Humour and Work Performance, and Positive Humour and Work Attitude was tested. The possible moderating effect of a Fun Climate on these relationships was then examined as was the possible moderating effect of the Supervisors' Sense of Humour. (H_{1.1} - H_{1.6}).

Linear regressions were then used to explore the relationships between Positive Humour and all the PsyCap components, hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience, and with PsyCap itself (hypotheses H_{1.7} to H_{1.11}). Regressions were also used to determine the relationships between PsyCap and Work Performance, and PsyCap and Work Attitude for the collected data and finally the relationship between PsyCap including Positive Humour and the two selected workplace outcomes, Performance and Attitude (H_{1.12} to H_{1.15}).

The Model Summaries, Coefficients Table and Correlations Table for each PsyCap element and the PsyCap construct, with PosHum as independent variables, are presented in Appendices 9 and 10.

5.2.3 Team agreement on 'Fun Climate'

The concept of a 'fun' workplace climate was supported by the CFA in which four items were tested and, for the data collected, all loaded strongly on the latent variable labelled 'Fun Climate'. The two hypotheses exploring the moderating effect that a fun climate might have

on workplace performance and attitude were not initially supported. This analysis was initially conducted using the ‘fun climate’ data of all 290 participants. A subsequent retesting of the data occurred after an In-group Reliability (r_{wg}) analysis was conducted and data for the teams for which there was no consensus about that team’s ‘fun climate’ were removed. The results of the r_{wg} analysis are shown in Appendix 11 in which the teams removed (i.e. those with less than a 70 per cent agreement of their team having a ‘fun climate’) are highlighted. Appendix 11 also shows the average score of each team supervisor’s own assessment of the workplace’s ‘fun climate’ alongside an average of the individual averages within each group.

A simple comparison between these two columns shows that the majority (57 per cent) of the supervisors’ averages exceed the teams’ average scores. In six cases the difference is 1 or greater (out of a possible 5) indicating that for those groups the supervisor’s perception of the workplace as having a ‘fun climate’ is ≥ 20 per cent higher than the group’s average of the individual averages. In three cases this was reversed with the group’s average of the individual averages being greater than the group’s supervisor average score. However one of these three was scored by a group eliminated by the r_{wg} analysis effectively leaving only two teams in which the group’s average of the individual averages was much greater than the group’s supervisor average score.

A possible explanation for supervisors’ assessing their workplaces as being ‘fun’ places with a higher score than the average given by their subordinates is the influence of self-report bias. Research participants often respond to questionnaires in a way that makes them look as good as possible (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002). Knowing the current research was assessing humour, there may therefore have been a tendency for supervisors to respond to

questions relating to the existence of a ‘fun climate’ within their workplaces with answers they felt were appropriate rather than factual.

This tendency for survey participants to respond in socially desirable ways rather than providing factual information was also reported by Moorman and Podsakoff (1992).

The pre- and post- r_{wg} analysis scenarios are presented and in both cases the existence of a fun climate within the workplace had no moderating effect on either work performance or work attitude.

5.2.4 Analysis overview

Referring to the detailed results shown in Appendix 10, the R^2 value for each regression is given on the graph indicating how much variance in the variable is explained by the model. The R^2 value is a statistical measure of the closeness of the data to the fitted regression line. The Significance Level (Sig.) for all data and the Pearson Correlation are tabulated for each of the hypotheses to be tested. The Significance Level (Sig.) for all the PosHum data is less than 0.05 indicating a strong presumption against the null hypotheses and therefore rejecting them, supporting the hypotheses. The results were mixed, as shown in the Results Summary below. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between PosHum and the dependent variables (being the construct PsyCap and its individual elements of hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism) plus WA, WP and FC. All the Pearson Correlations were positive.

5.3 Results summary

The hypotheses testing the relationships between the workplace outcomes of Work Performance and Work Attitudes, and Positive Humour, together with the moderating effects of the existence of a Fun Climate and the Supervisors' Sense of Humour (H_{1.1} to H_{1.6}) were not supported, with the exception of H_{1.2}, the relationship between Positive Humour and Work Attitude.

H_{1.1}: *Positive humour is positively related to work performance.* Not supported.

H_{1.2}: *Positive humour is positively related to work attitudes.* Supported.

H_{1.3}: *The relationship between positive humour and work performance in a work team will be moderated by the level of a 'Fun Climate' within that team.*

Not supported.

H_{1.4}: *The relationship between positive humour and work attitude in a work team will be moderated by the level of a 'Fun Climate' within that team.*

Not supported.

H_{1.5}: *The relationship between positive humour and work performance within a work team will be moderated by the level of the team's supervisor's sense of humour.*

Not supported.

H_{1.6}: *The relationship between positive humour and work attitude within a work team will be moderated by the level of the team's supervisor's sense of humour.*

Not supported.

However, hypotheses testing showed strong positive relationships existed between Positive Humour and all the PsyCap components, hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience, and with PsyCap itself (hypotheses H_{1.7} to H_{1.11}).

H _{1.7} : <i>Positive humour is positively related to hope.</i>	Supported.
H _{1.8} : <i>Positive humour is positively related to optimism.</i>	Supported.
H _{1.9} : <i>Positive humour is positively related to resilience.</i>	Supported.
H _{1.10} : <i>Positive humour is positively related to self-efficacy.</i>	Supported.
H _{1.11} : <i>Positive humour is positively related to PsyCap.</i>	Supported.

The hypotheses testing the relationship between PsyCap and the desirable workplace outcomes of Work Performance and Work Attitudes (H_{1.12}, H_{1.13}) revealed strong positive correlations existed.

H _{1.12} : <i>PsyCap is positively related to work performance.</i>	Supported.
H _{1.13} : <i>PsyCap is positively related to work attitudes.</i>	Supported.

Adding Positive Humour into these relationships between PsyCap and Work Performance, and PsyCap and Work Attitude (H_{1.14}, H_{1.15}), revealed that these hypotheses were also supported, however the impact of Positive Humour on what was already a strong correlation between PsyCap and the workplace outcomes Work Performance and Work Attitudes, was small.

H _{1.14} : <i>PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work performance.</i>	Supported.
H _{1.15} : <i>PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work attitudes.</i>	Supported.

No inference can be drawn from these analyses as to cause and effect. The research was primarily conducted to establish the existence, or not, of a relationship between the variables.

CHAPTER SIX

Reflections and discussion

In this final chapter, the initial aims of the study are revisited and complemented by a summary of the key contributions this research has made to the bodies of literature reviewed in Chapters 1 to 3. Implications for the practical and theoretical application of the research findings within workplaces will also be addressed. Finally, the limitations evident in this research, and the opportunities emerging from this study for future research in this field, are discussed.

6.1 The aims of the study

The initial aim of this research was to explore the use of humour within workplaces and determine whether or not it may be useful to develop and encourage the appreciation and use of humour in employees, with a view to enhancing workplace outcomes. The ability to identify positive humour styles and differentiate between people's preferences for positive or negative humour (Martin et al., 2003) enabled the current research to proceed without the impediments experienced in previous attempts to examine the relationship between humour use and workplace outcomes. Results from previous research into this relationship were compromised because there was no way of determining whether the 'humour' being assessed in this context was actually helping or hindering those outcomes being measured (Judge et al., 2001).

Specific questions to be answered were formulated following the literature search. These questions are listed on page 87. The responses to these questions are individually addressed below with the outcomes discussed including links to the relevant hypotheses tested.

6.1.1 Can the use of positive humour in workplaces enhance employee attitudes and performance?

There were many options available to examine the value of humour in workplaces including the use of humour in leadership, teambuilding, organisational culture building, communication, training and stress management. After searching the available literature to examine previous research, and exploring the opportunities to extend the current research into new areas, the two attributes of work attitude and work performance became the primary workplace outcomes chosen for this research into the possible benefits of humour in the workplace. Other effects of workplace humour were examined and discussed in this thesis but the study was narrowed to workplace performance and attitude primarily because of the measures they encompass and also because the data used to measure these attributes came from two different collection strategies; namely self report and supervisor assessment, strengthening the methodology.

For the purposes of this research, 'Work Attitudes' included the individual worker's job satisfaction, their intention to stay or leave the organisation, and their attachment to that organisation. The data collected to measure these workplace attitude indicators were sourced from the individual employee's self-reports. 'Work Performance' covered each worker's propensity for teamwork, their creativity, their contribution to the organisation and their discretionary effort, as assessed by their supervisor.

The relationship between employee work performance and positive humour was shown to be in the direction expected by the hypothesis but is not significant ($H_{1.1}$). The positive relationship between Positive Humour and Work Attitude was shown to be statistically

significant ($H_{1.2}$). Noting the component parts of the variable 'Work Attitudes' (namely job satisfaction, intention to stay and organisational attachment), this may simply reflect an assumption that a worker scoring highly in these considerations will also indicate their preference and use of humour as being 'positive'. It may follow that workers who are basically satisfied with their job, have no intention of leaving and who feel an attachment to their workplace would be more inclined to use or favour positive humour.

6.1.2 What is the relationship between PsyCap and its constituent parts

(hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism), and a positive humour style?

As mentioned in 6.1 above, through the work of Martin et al. (2003), it was now possible to specifically examine positive humour. This development, along with a growing awareness of the potential of developing Psychological Capital (PsyCap) within organisations through positive workplace interventions, enabled a convergence of these two fields to be considered as having a complementary positive effect on workplace attitudes and performance. Also, as Luthans et al, (2003) had suggested the PsyCap construct may eventually expand to include humour (among other attributes), it was determined that an examination of the relationships between PsyCap, its four existing indicators (hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy) and Positive Humour would be beneficial in developing the existing body of knowledge in this field. This would also initiate a further investigation into the acceptability of Positive Humour as a future potential PsyCap indicator. The research showed that a positive relationship existed between PsyCap and a positive humour style ($H_{1.11}$).

6.1.3 Can positive humour be considered along with hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism as a worthy addition to the construct PsyCap?

Complementary research aims which served to expand and strengthen this study were developed early in the research process as the literature search revealed contemporary developments in the field of humour research and successful organisational development interventions. The emergence of Positive Psychology, leading to the construct Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2007), was reviewed and ultimately included as part of the current study. This was due to the claim that by improving PsyCap within organisations, significant benefits for workplaces including performance and satisfaction outcomes would follow (Luthans et al., 2007, Avey et al, 2011). Importantly, as both PsyCap and Positive Humour were built on a foundation of positivity, the natural convergence of these two considerations suggested a synergy that may collectively enhance their individual benefits to workplace outcomes.

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis using Positive Humour (together with the existing PsyCap indicators) showed an acceptable loading onto the PsyCap construct. Subsequent linear regressions all showed that a positive relationship existed between Positive Humour and PsyCap, and each of the other PsyCap indicators. (H_{1.7} to H_{1.11}). This does not imply a cause and effect relationship between these variables; merely that a statistically significant positive relationship exists.

6.1.4 Is there a relationship between positive humour and PsyCap, and work performance and work attitudes?

The organisational benefits of PsyCap have previously been well researched (Luthans et al., 2010; Avey et al., 2011; Youssef and Luthans, 2011; Spence-Laschinger and Nosko, 2013; Sihag and Sarikwal, 2014) and are presented in Chapter 3. From the data collected and analysed in this research, the evidence base pertaining to Work Performance (teamwork, creativity and commitment) and Work Attitudes (satisfaction, turn-over intention and organisational affective commitment) and PsyCap was strengthened (H_{1.12} and H_{1.13}).

The relationship between Positive Humour and Work Performance was not strong and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected although the relationship was in the direction anticipated by the hypothesis (H_{1.1}). This suggests that the use of positive humour in a workplace is, at least, probably not detrimental to that workplace or its outcomes. The inclusion of Positive Humour within the PsyCap construct resulted in a positive relationship being evident with both Work Performance and Work Attitude (hypotheses H_{1.14} and H_{1.15}) which is encouraging but should be treated with care as the contribution of the two constructs is quite uneven with the greater share of the outcome being derived from PsyCap.

6.1.5 Are the relationships between the above variables moderated by ‘fun climate’ at a team level?

Substantial evidence was found in the literature to suggest that the promotion of a fun climate within a workplace has positive performance and attitudinal outcomes (e.g. Weinstein, 1997; Barbour, 1998; Deal and Kennedy, 1999; Fredrickson, 2001; Hudson, 2001; Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). The inspiration to investigate whether or not a ‘fun climate’ moderated the

relationship between Positive Humour and Work Performance and Work Attitudes respectively, based on this literature, appeared theoretically sound as the research plan developed. The workplace 'Fun Climate' dimension was further explored to determine whether 'within-group reliability' existed, thus ensuring that the 'Fun Climate' variable used in this research was agreed upon at a team level. Some teams assessed as having no 'within-group agreement' were eliminated during this phase of the research. However, the final results were not supportive of the hypotheses. The research revealed that the existence of a 'fun climate' in an organisation had little impact upon the relationship between positive humour and both work performance and work attitude (H_{1.3} and H_{1.4}).

6.1.6 Are the relationships between the above variables moderated by the self-assessed sense of humour of each team supervisor?

The literature was supportive of the beneficial effects that a supervisor's own sense of humour potentially has upon the effectiveness his or her leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Crawford, 1994; Rizzo, Wanzer and Booth-Butterfield, 1999; Goleman et al., 2002; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008). The current research explored the effect that the supervisor's Sense of Humour may have had on the relationships existing between Positive Humour and both Work Attitude and Work Performance for all participating teams.

The results revealed that there was no evidence to suggest a significant moderation of the existing relationships by the supervisors' sense of humour (H_{1.5} and H_{1.6}). Cultural considerations may have had an impact on this result. The broadly held view that Australian workers tend to be anti-authoritarian is explored further when the limitations of this research are discussed in Section 6.4.

6.2 Key findings

A key contribution to the literature during the Confirmatory Factor Analysis phase of the research was the finding that Positive Humour loaded onto the PsyCap construct. Two styles of humour termed affiliative and self-enhancing (Martin et al. 2003) were shown to load onto a new latent variable, Positive Humour. Positive Humour in turn loaded onto the PsyCap construct along with the existing indicators hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism (see Chapter 5.1.3).

Positive Humour loaded onto the PsyCap variable more strongly than did resilience, one of the existing indicators. This supports the observation made by Dawkins et al., (2013) suggesting that more work is required to strengthen the current PsyCap construct before considering the addition of further possible contenders to ‘sit under the PsyCap umbrella’. However, when it is considered appropriate to include additional indicators into the PsyCap construct, then humour, or more specifically positive humour, as suggested by the outcomes of the current research, must be seen as one of the first contenders.

In relation to the lesser loading of resilience during the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, it must be noted that the data collected and used in the current research may differ greatly from similar data collected elsewhere or even from the same sources at a different time. It is merely indicative of the probabilities of such findings holding true globally and in all workplace situations.

Ten out of the 15 hypothesis tested by linear regressions, were supported. Those not supported were primarily hypotheses testing the moderating effects of a Fun Climate and the

supervisors' Sense of Humour on other relationships. The potential reasons for this will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

6.3 Implications for organisations

The positive relationships found to exist between Positive Humour and Work Attitudes (hypothesis H₁:2), PsyCap and Work Performance (hypothesis H₁:12 and PsyCap and Work Attitudes (hypothesis H₁:13) strengthen the argument for these constructs to be promoted within organisations as part of ongoing organisational staff development. This may suggest some further value for organisations to encourage, or at least not discourage, the appropriate use of positive humour in their workplaces.

The relationship between Positive Humour and Work Performance (hypothesis H₁:1) was shown to be in the expected positive direction but was not statistically significant. Similarly the other hypotheses not supported (hypothesis H₁:3 to hypothesis H₁:6 inclusive), which examined the moderating effects of both a 'fun climate' and the supervisors' sense of humour on the relationships between positive humour and work performance and work attitude respectively, were also shown to be in the expected positive direction although again were not statistically significant.

The implications for workplaces arising from the outcomes of this study suggest that developing Psychological Capital amongst employees will have beneficial results for the organisation. In addition, using humour at work that is appropriate, inclusive, uplifting and not disruptive may also produce some positive outcomes for organisations, especially through workers' attitudes. These attitudes, which in this study comprised the employee's level of job satisfaction, their organisational attachment (affective commitment) and their intention to

stay with the organisation, all enhance workplace stability and effectiveness. Even if management decides that humour should not be actively encouraged within their workplace, it appears that it would be counter-productive to discourage positive humour.

However, should managers decide to encourage more humour within the workplace, there are further issues that must be considered. Despite an impressive list of possible benefits to be derived from humour, Warren and Fineman (2007) expressed a concern that the 'managed' inclusion of humour within an organisation may be problematic. If the 'fun' was to be instructed and predetermined from a managerial level and its outcomes highly controlled, the activity could be viewed with cynicism by workers resulting in the intended 'fun' being diminished or even non-existent.

This view is supported by an emerging form of identity management called 'neo-normative control' - the celebration of difference and fun as an expression of oneself. Neo-normative control highlights private and authentic aspects of the individual employee as distinct from conventional culture and fun management programs (Fleming and Sturdy, 2009). The 'be yourself' ethic as it applies to humour and authenticity is an indicator of a freer work environment.

This suggests that for the fun and humour to be productive it should be naturally occurring (organic) as well as positive. Also supporting this view, the creator of the management cartoon character *Dilbert*, Scott Adams (quoted in Nilsen and Nilsen, 2000, p.143) said that humour cannot be imposed on an organisation in an attempt to cure its problems. He states that humour will come naturally after everything else is done correctly. Humour in moderation is the key, so it follows that all attempts at introducing fun and humour into a

work environment should be dictated by appropriateness and guided by common sense (Breeze, Dawson and Khazhinsky, 2002).

In addition, should the predicted future ‘war for talent’ becomes a reality (Luthans et al., 2007; Nankervis et al., 2011), workers will seek organisations where their happiness needs are fulfilled, along with the other motivating factors that are important to them (Berg, 2001; Oswald et al., 2014). As humour has been shown to be a desirable human attribute that can benefit social cohesion (Noon and Blyton, 1997), a humourless work environment may leave organisations searching for suitable employees as others leave to find employment that satisfies their higher needs. Costs incurred in recruitment and selection activities to replace disaffected workers, plus those incurred in training and developing replacement employees, all detract from an organisation’s bottom line. If the retention of valuable employees is an organisational priority, then all aspects of the workplace culture should be considered and this may include the acceptance or encouragement of the appropriate use of positive humour.

Finally, the strong correlations between Positive Humour, PsyCap and its existing indicators of hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy, together with the strong Confirmatory Factor Analysis loading that Positive Humour had on PsyCap, has exciting implications for workplaces. The benefits of developing PsyCap in organisations is well documented (Luthans et al., 2010; Aver et al., 2011; Youssef and Luthans, 2011; Spence-Laschinger and Nosko, 2013.) Now there is an opportunity to add humour, with the proviso that it is positive, inclusive and uplifting, into a range of interventions that will help workers be more productive at work while being personally happier, more satisfied and more committed to their workplace.

6.4 Limitations of this research

The data used for this research is from a diverse sample of 290 workers from the Australian workforce covering 50 work teams from 11 different industry sectors with a mix of public sector, private sector and not-for-profit organisations. Although this is a satisfactory sample size and spread, with an added strength if including multi-level data, it was a convenient sample sourced through the researcher's own networks of professional bodies; primarily the Australian Human Resources Institute, the Public Relations Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Project Management. The limitation inferred by sourcing the data in this way is that it may have attracted responses from people already active in the areas being studied. That is, organisations belonging to proactive peak bodies such as these may already be engaging their employees in the direction of hypotheses being tested by this research.

All data in this research was collected by survey as a multi-source strategy with most data coming from employee self-rated predictors and the remainder coming from supervisor-rated employee assessment. Although this could be considered a strength of the current research, the method for data collection has inherent limitations as there was no opportunity for control over those being surveyed, or for clarification of any points of confusion within the respondent (Berenson and Levine, 1996). The data collected may also have been skewed by existing biases of participants and is therefore not infallible (Schwarz (1999; Luthans, et al., 2007). Participants were asked questions and their responses were recorded on a scale. A Likert scale was used in this research which may also have limitations. For example, a five or seven-point response such as those used, allows the potential for participants to return neutral results consistently.

Using a significance level of 0.05 (5%) for the regression analyses in this research is also recognised as a limitation as this may result in a greater probability of Type 1 or Type 2 errors occurring and thus incorrect conclusions being reached. This limitation is acknowledged in Chapter 4.7 in which the opportunity to re-run the regressions reported in this thesis, within more stringent parameters (eg $\alpha = 0.01$ or $\alpha = 0.02$), was also suggested.

Some of this study's limitations may also be due to the need for further research to be conducted into PsyCap. As noted by Dawkins et al. (2013), the PsyCap construct and its primary measure, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) still has some weaknesses to overcome including a perceived under-developed theory and investigation affirming the state-like nature of each of the components of PsyCap, together with a potential interplay with related trait-like constructs. For humour to be considered as a PsyCap indicator, the issue of its state-like nature would also need to be resolved. Ruch and Köhler (1998) suggest there is, as yet, no explicit conceptualisation of humour as a state. Other constructs used in this research which did not result in the outcomes hypothesised were 'work performance' and 'work attitudes'. The variables chosen as the basis of these were validated but more research into the availability of more suitable instruments may have helped. For example instruments that do not rely on self-reporting, or those not having a potential for subjective supervisor biases, could have been investigated (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002; Spector, Fox and Van Katwyk, 1999).

Yet another limitation of this research is the concern still being raised over the underlying philosophies of Positive Organisational Behaviour upon which PsyCap is based and the relatively rapid way PsyCap research is progressing on the uncertain foundation of POB.

One shortcoming of POB is its assumption that simple cause–effect relationships exist between workplace attributes and outcomes. Future POB research would benefit from investigating dynamic, reciprocal relationships that are found to be mutually supportive and result in an ‘upward spiral’ of group positivity (Fredrickson, 2003; Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008). This concern is being addressed by a growing number of recent research papers being published increasing confidence that the basic philosophies of PsyCap are sound (Avey et al., 2011).

From a workplace perspective, another limitation acknowledged is the actual value of the employees’ responses in assessing organisational productivity. The data collected relied on self-reports from the individual participants and supervisor’s assessments, and both of these methods of data collection are potentially flawed. The results from both methods can be altered through a positive or negative bias and are susceptible to subjective rather than objective responses. Access to specific and reliable data (e.g. workers’ leave taken due to ill health, individual job-specific productivity measures or strictly objective worker assessments) may provide a stronger basis on which to determine more meaningful results. Because of the sensitive nature of this type of information, organisations may, understandably, be reluctant to share it with researchers.

This study would have also benefited from a better understanding of the relationship that existed between the participants and their supervisors in each work team. The effect that the supervisors’ Sense of Humour had on the relationships between Positive Humour and Work Performance, and Positive Humour and Work Attitude may have been better understood and more meaningful if the existing dynamic between supervisors and workers in each case could have been considered and factored into the analysis. For example, a collegial rather than a

confrontational relationship may have enhanced the positive effects reported by the supervisor's Sense of Humour. Determining the humour style preferences of supervisors may also have resulted in a more meaningful research and useful outcomes. However, respondent burden considerations for supervisors influenced the decision not to include the HSQ as well as the MSHS. It was considered more important to understand supervisor's sense of humour (MSHS) rather than their style preference (HSQ) to examine the relationships of interest. Each supervisor was already being asked to respond to 35 questions (covering demographics, workplace culture and their own sense of humour) as well as 12 questions on the workplace attitude and performance FOR EACH of their participating subordinates. As the average participating team size was expected to be around six individuals, an expectation for each supervisor to respond to more than the existing 107 items $[35 + (12 \times 6)]$ was considered excessive, especially in work teams with an above-average number of individual participants.

Two major limitations of this research were also identified. These are cultural considerations and the possible mismatch between supervisors and workers in regard to their sense of humour, their use of humour and the workplace culture. These limitations are addressed in further detail below.

6.4.1 Cultural considerations

The assumption that all OECD countries may have similar cultures and therefore a one-size-fits-all approach to any research instrument is problematic. Tensions and contradictions exist between the cultures of OECD countries (Kearns and Papadopoulos, 2000) and, it can be assumed, similar differences will affect all countries. All cultures are generally made up of

the established routines, practices and accepted 'normal' behaviour between people. They tend to be deeply rooted in custom that is reinforced by habit and convention, and are usually resistant to change especially if the change appears to be coming from an external influence (NAGCELL, 1999). To fully satisfy this limitation of the current research necessitates a cultural realignment of the HSQ to accommodate specific cultural differences.

Despite its universal appeal, how humour is perceived and understood may often vary dependent on ethnic groups and different cultures (Davies, 2002; Czinkota et al., 2009; Milner Davis, 2013). Similarly, the differentiation between positive and negative humour styles may shift across cultures and sub-cultures depending on what is acceptable and what is regarded as 'the norm' within specific regional or cultural demographics. For example, there is a plethora of anecdotal evidence available regarding the reactions by other cultures to Australian humour (McCallum, 1998; Davies, 2002; Haugh and Bousfield, 2012). These reactions range from bemusement to offence. Much of the humour used and accepted in Australian workplaces fits in the 'aggressive' category identified by Martin et al., (2003) and, as discussed above, would be categorised as negative humour in the current study. This categorisation does not allow for the 'acceptability' or otherwise of such humour in certain situations to be considered. The results obtained from this study may have been enhanced if an Australian-specific humour styles questionnaire was to be developed. For example, it could take account of the culturally accepted practice of 'stirring'.

Some aspects of humour in Western cultures are similar whereas others differ (Martin and Sullivan, 2013). When using the Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS), Martin and Sullivan (2013) found that the attitude of British respondents toward humorous people was significantly more negative than those of the Australian participants, while American

participants were reported as using humour more frequently than British participants in social situations. Haugh and Bousfield (2012) reported that the degree of banter and ‘mock impoliteness’ demonstrated between Australians and British (men in particular) did not differ and that the targets of abuse in these exchanges of banter are similar in both cultures. The inference here is that neither culture takes itself seriously. The exchange reported in Appendix 12 of this thesis illustrates this propensity.

Incorporating cultural considerations within the research may lead to more meaningful results for future researchers. For example, Australian work teams may be more tolerant of humour that was disregarded as it did not fit the Martin et al.’s (2003) definition of being ‘positive’. Possible reasons for this are discussed in Appendix 12 This was not part of the current study but none-the-less worthy of consideration. By eliminating much of the workplace humour reported in the data collected exclusively from Australian workplaces because it was deemed ‘negative’ under the parameters of this study, the overall humour / fun dimension may have been skewed. That is, some of the eliminated humour items that were labelled ‘negative’ may not have been viewed as detrimental within Australian workplaces where ‘ribbing’ and ‘stirring’ are an accepted, and often valued, part of the organisational culture. Appendix 12 has examples to support this theory. An opportunity to reconfigure the research to account for Australian humour may produce results that are more relevant to Australian workplaces.

Cultural differences were also identified as being problematic in the research of relationships between PsyCap and work outcomes conducted by Avey et al. (2011). They reported that stronger relationships were shown to exist in US-based data than did in samples from China, India and Australia.

6.4.2 When humour isn't funny

The current research found that a supervisor's sense of humour had little influence on the relationships between Positive Humour and Work Performance, and Positive Humour and Work Attitude. Again, this may be due to cultural considerations in which, although there is no empirical evidence to support this, the accepted urban myth (or perhaps it is a legend) suggests that the attitudes of Australian workers to authority figures may indicate that they pay little heed to how management perceives what may or may not be humorous and / or fun. An official Australian Government website (<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-humour>) acknowledges this attitude.

Australians also have a very strong anti-authoritarian sense of humour, again a reflection of our past. This aspect has been in evidence since colonial times where the ability to make a policeman or other authority figure laugh often meant the difference between the gallows or harsh labour and freedom.

Australian humour is characterised by jokes described as overstatements that are typical of a masculine society. The historical explanation for this may lie in the early colonisation of Australia by a mostly male convict population that formed the basis of today's Australian culture (Davies, 2002). Negative humour is not specifically studied in this thesis as the research has a focus of positivity, however subversive humour, as a form of negative humour, is briefly discussed using a case study in Appendix 13 to illustrate a possible confusion of humour styles and positive and negative outcomes.

The role of humour in providing relief from work pressures, or as a way to counter boredom or to overcome the tedium of repetitive tasks, should not be underestimated. Nor should one ignore its satirical force, especially when directed at managerial targets (Taylor and Bain,

2003). Managers perceived to be applying continual pressure upon workers to meet increasingly difficult targets or to achieve more productivity with fewer resources; or who are thought of as bullying or intimidating workers, will become unpopular and thus most likely become the butt of workplace jokes.

Such employee humour may include actions that are detrimental to organisations such as ridicule, resistance to instruction or, in the worst-case scenario, sabotage (Linstead, 1985). This is an obvious example of ‘negative’ humour and is often used by subordinates as a method of dealing with strict managerial control. It offers an informal mechanism through which work groups can define their own identity (Collinson, 1988). This is commonly referred to as ‘subversive humour’ (See Appendix 13).

The relationship that exists between supervisors or managers and their subordinates may determine a climate in which the humour is shared (and thus mostly affiliative) or subversive should there be a climate of antagonism between management and the workforce. Literature focusing on the benefits of humour use by supervisors reported that those who possess and use appropriate humour are generally better liked by their subordinates and make the most effective leaders (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Crawford, 1994; Rizzo, Wanzer and Booth-Butterfield, 1999; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008).

In addition, the ability to investigate whether or not a supervisor’s sense of humour aligned with that of his / her subordinates may have clarified or helped explain the influence that the supervisor’s sense of humour had on the relationship between the team’s use of Positive Humour and the Work Performance and Work Attitude. Use of the Multidimensional Sense of Humour Scale (MSHS) provided an overall score for the supervisor’s humour, but the

scope of the current research did not include an investigation into the alignment of this humour with that of the team. Also, there was no capacity to determine whether the supervisors' humour was positive or negative through the use of the MSHS. This is now recognised as a short-coming of the current research.

6.5 Opportunities for future research

Despite the conclusions drawn by Dawkins et al. (2013) for the need to consolidate the existing PsyCap construct before adding further indicators, the opportunity to build on the current research and establish positive humour as a PsyCap element would make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge. In formulating the PsyCap construct, Luthans et al., (2007) also considered other cognitive and affective strengths displayed by individuals including creativity, wisdom, wellbeing, flow and humour and identified additional indicators including gratitude, forgiveness, emotional intelligence, spirituality, authenticity and courage. The literature reviewed in this thesis did examine some linkages between positive humour, wellbeing and creativity (Chapter 2.4.1); and positive humour and flow (Chapter 3.1). It is apparent that many opportunities now exist to research linkages between all the existing and possible PsyCap indicators to determine their synergies and their possible individual and collective benefits for workplaces.

Also, there are many other ways in which humour could be 'harnessed' to improve workplaces, other than the attitude and performance focus of this research. The potential of humour having a positive impact on leadership effectiveness, teamwork, culture building and other aspects of contemporary work environments could be the subject of future research, relating these considerations to any or all of the above-mentioned PsyCap possibilities.

Humour use and appreciation varies vastly between cultures (Davies, 2002; Milner Davis, 2013). The cultural considerations mentioned as a limitation to this current research, also opens many opportunities to expand upon the work of Martin et al. (2003) to embrace cultural differences in the understanding and acceptance of humour. From a purely parochial perspective, such research may initially examine the response to, and ‘rating’ of, a series of workplace incidents that were perceived as humorous, to determine and compare how these may be viewed in Australia and North America / Canada where the HSQ was developed. A possible hypothesis for this research may propose that some humour labelled aggressive or self-deprecating on the North American continent, may be more acceptable in an Australian context given its different culture. Expanding this research to other English-speaking OECD countries (the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand), then into the non-English speaking OECD countries (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), and beyond that into Australia’s trading partners such as China and India, may produce a range of responses that could be used to strengthen the HSQ’s cross-cultural applicability. Such a spread of countries and cultures would provide a useful understanding of the appropriateness of humour and humour styles in dealings with these countries’ businesses and citizens. Having such knowledge and understanding in the growing global economy would be beneficial for developing future relationships with these countries.

Given this, a future research project focussing on a cultural clarification of the Humour Style Questionnaire (HSQ) within an Australian context would be a very valuable addition to the body of knowledge around workplace humour. An example of a culturally modified use of

the HSQ developed by Penzo et al., (2011) for use in Italy, and as used by Falanga (2014), was reported in Chapter 3.5.4.

An opportunity also exists to develop and implement specific humour interventions to coincide with PsyCap-based interventions within workplaces and conduct longitudinal research projects to determine the effect, if any, such interventions had on workplace outcomes such as the attitude and performance indicators used in the current research.

A fundamental challenge for future research opportunities was issued by Hackman (2009) who believes that many of the claimed benefits of positivity are yet to be demonstrated. He also observed that only ‘half the story’ is being addressed by providing positive organisational scholarship tools to help individuals deal with the challenges of life and work. More research is needed within the POB paradigm to help identify and create suitable conditions within organisations to promote learning and growth. To achieve this, researchers working in this field are encouraged to shift their focus from individuals and to concentrate their efforts in determining the positive structural features that are the basis of the social systems in which people live and work (Hackman, 2009).

6.6 Conclusions

The literature search conducted at the beginning of this research only found one study which linked PsyCap and humour; that being Hughes (2008). As reported in Chapter 3.6.1, Hughes (2008) conducted a correlational study of the relationship between a sense of humour and PsyCap capacities. Although that study produced encouraging results, there was no attempt to differentiate between the styles of humour being used for the correlations.

The current study is one of very few, along with Hughes (2008), that examines the relationship between humour and PsyCap, and appears to be the only study to date that focuses specifically on positive humour in this relationship and linking these constructs to the potentially beneficial effects that they may have on workplace productivity.

The results produced by this research suggest that the use of positive humour within workplaces is of value and mutual benefit to both employers and employees. Likewise positive humour appears to complement and contribute to the PsyCap construct which, with its indicators of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, is also of great value to workplaces. As this field is relatively new, with the potential for many more workplace benefits yet to be examined, it is a field worthy of future research.

Although this thesis does not provide a definitive answer as to whether or not workplace humour is to be encouraged, it does provide a step towards highlighting the value that humour may bring to workplaces and strongly suggests to managers and leaders within organisations that positive humour should not be discouraged. That is organisational leaders are encouraged to allow and promote the use of appropriate, positive humour in the workplace and to realise potential benefits from a happier and more engaged workforce. The

caveat here is that the humour should be organic and that management directives mandating its use would be counterproductive (Provine, 2000; Warren and Fineman, 2007).

A possible message to deliver to all workers is to ‘take your work seriously and take yourself lightly’. This may benefit workers through enhanced personal relationships, effective stress management, increased job satisfaction and fulfilment, and happiness generally. In turn the organisation may be rewarded with a workforce that functions better as a team and is creative, loyal and more committed to a shared vision of organisational outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Newspaper ‘situation vacant’ advertisements

When advertising staff vacancies, some organisations use words such as ‘a fun team’ to encourage applicants. From the definitions explored in Chapter 2, ‘fun’ in these contexts implies some workplace humour. The examples below illustrates this trend.

Are you looking for a fun place to work with a steady intense workload, while working with dynamic gregarious people? Then this job may be for you! We are after a team player to assist with the running of the Reserve Career Management Cell in the Directorate of Navy Officers Postings - DNOP RCMC Adviser FRC Position 489431.

(A Royal Australian Navy recruitment advertisement, July 2007).

Even though this advertisement mentions ‘fun’ it is relatively conservative (as one would expect from a Defence Force notice) compared the following vacancy advertisement sourced from *The Mercury* newspaper, Hobart, Tasmania 2007 (extracts only).

*365 DAYS OFF A YEAR
COZ IT’S NOT LIKE WORK WHEN IT’S FUN*

*At Fusion we value people who are: Bloody funny (we are); grounded (not by your Mum)
and most importantly you don’t take yourself too seriously.*

As you can see we don’t. Fusion is all about people, fun, lifestyle and success.

The focus on a fun-filled work environment has not abated in the six years since this study began. A more recent example:

*Want to be part of a growing company with a great culture?
Work within a fun team for a great employer*

*Momentum Energy Position Vacant advertisement
The Mercury Hobart, Tasmania Saturday 30 November 2013, p 68*

Appendix 2

Biographies and newspaper reports illustrating the use of humour as a coping mechanism

A prime example of the use of humour as a coping mechanism helping people to survive horrific circumstances was captured in Victor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. Frankl, a psychiatrist and himself a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II, recorded that humour was one of the things that helped people survive in those camps. Finding things to laugh at helped the prisoners maintain a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

Frankl (1992) wrote 'humour was another of the soul's weapons in the fight for self-preservation. Humour, more than anything else in the human makeup, affords an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds.'

He described a 'kind of cabaret' that was improvised from time to time within the concentration camp. 'They came to have a few laughs or perhaps to cry a little; anyway, to forget. There were songs, poems, jokes, some with underlying satire regarding the camp. All were meant to help us forget, and they did help.' Frankl *felt* that he would not have come out of the camps alive if he could not have laughed - just enough to lift him, momentarily, out of his horrible situation. That was enough to make the situation livable and survivable.

He suggested that the attempt to develop a sense of humour and to see things in a humorous light (even in the direst of circumstances such as those he endured in the concentration camps) is 'some kind of trick learned while mastering the art of living.' Subsequent conflicts have produced more books reporting horrific detentions endured in ways that support Frankl's observations.

Captain Gerald Coffee, a prisoner of war held captive for seven years during the Vietnam War, said that humour was essential to his survival. Coffee (1990) reported how laughter helped him through even the most tragic circumstances. Similarly Terry Anderson, held captive by Hezbollah terrorists for over six years during the late 1980s, the longest held Western hostage during Lebanon's 15-year civil war, shared his experiences. *Anderson (1993) describes* how a sense of humour helped him and his fellow prisoners cope with their situation. In *Time* magazine's (4 October 1993) critique, the book's reviewer, R.Z. Shepherd,

said that Anderson's book *Den of Lions* 'belongs on the shelf of classics about surviving degradation with dignity and even humour.'

More recently reports were written on the way humour sustained two trapped miners, Todd Russell and Brant Webb in the Beaconsfield (Tasmania) Gold Mine disaster. The two miners were trapped a kilometre below the Earth's surface for fourteen days following an earth tremor on 25 April 2006. A work colleague was killed by the initial rock fall on the day of the earthquake.

What became a major focus for media reports of the miners' peril was the humour of the two men throughout their ordeal. Headlines such as 'Jokes relieve pressure' (*The Examiner*, 4 May 2006) and 'Larrikin humour relieves tension' (*The Examiner*, 6 May 2006) were common. *The Advocate* (6 May 2006) ran an article entitled "Miners' sense of humour helps them through." In the same edition of *The Advocate* (and on the same page, p.7) Australian Psychological Society spokesman Dr Bob Montgomery, wrote an article explaining that "jokes are 'normal' even when buried alive."

Appendix 3

Materials provided to participants and their supervisors.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA - SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

The value of positive humour in the workplace

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study aimed at identifying the value of humour in the workplace. The study is being conducted by PhD student Daryl Peebles under the supervision of Drs Angela Martin and Rob Hecker.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate how workers' use of humour, the 'style' of humour used and their psychological attributes of hope, optimism, efficacy and resilience are associated with aspects of their work performance such as teamwork, creativity and work commitment.

Why have you been invited to participate in this study?

A number of Australian workplaces have been selected to ensure a diversity of private and public sector industry types, wage levels and gender. Your workplace has been chosen because the selected work team, or teams, fit this project's sampling framework.

What does this study involve?

Supervisors are asked to complete two questionnaires; the first about themselves and their organisation, and the second questionnaire relating to each of their participating team members. On average the first questionnaire has been shown to take 10 minutes to complete, and the questionnaire relating to each subordinate has been shown to take, on average, three minutes to complete.

Participation is voluntary and confidential

Your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. You may decide to discontinue participation at any time, without providing an explanation.

The 'opt in' nature of this invitation to participate is emphasized to yourself, your supervisor and your organisation's management. Therefore, should you decide not to participate there should be no adverse workplace consequence. Importantly, the following information about a participant or potential participant will NOT be provided to the participant's supervisor, Human Resource section or other employees:

- i. whether or not a potential participant has chosen to participate in the research
- ii. any response to a survey question (should a potential participant decide to participate).

All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising from the research. All personally identifiable data will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the School of Management, UTAS. The forms will be retained for a period of five years and then destroyed by shredding.

Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

By linking the findings of this study with broader results from known existing studies, a valuable insight in how humour and other human capacities may be managed within teams for enhanced workplace performance.

The key outcomes of the study will be made available, on request, to participating workgroups. Although the report will be non-specific to participating workplaces and individuals it may still prove helpful in providing insight for future team development.

Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

It is not anticipated that you will find any of the survey questions distressing. However, if you do experience any psychological distress as a result of your participation please abandon the survey immediately and seek support through your employer's Employee Assistance Program or by contacting Lifeline on 131114 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

What if I have questions about this research?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Angela Martin or Daryl Peebles on ph 6226 2713. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

A summary of the research will be made available to anybody who requests it.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote *HREC Project Number H0012161*.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study. You may remove the information sheets from this booklet (above) and keep for future reference if you want to.

If you do wish to take part, please sign this CONSENT FORM (below), complete the questionnaire and return this booklet (at least from this page onward up to page 15) to the researcher as arranged.

Additional copies of pages 11 to 15 (covering sections D and E of this survey) have been provided for each subordinate member in your team.

Title of Project: *The value of positive humour in the workplace*

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this project.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves the use and 'style' of humour and the psychological attributes of hope, optimism, efficacy and resilience displayed within workplaces together with associated aspects of work performance such as teamwork, creativity and work commitment.
4. I understand that my participation in this study involves the slight risk that some questions may cause me distress in which case I am to abandon the survey immediately and seek professional support.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for up to five years and will be destroyed at that time or earlier if no longer required.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.]
8. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and if I so wish, may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

Name of organisation's supervisor completing this survey: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / 2012

Statement by researcher

- ☐ I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.
- ☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of researcher: **Daryl Peebles**

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 2012

Organisation ID #: _____

Supervisor ID #: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

Supervisors are requested to complete the following 12 questions in Section D of this questionnaire for EACH SUBORDINATE.

Section D has been provided for each subordinate.

However, it is important that you note that this page, which identifies the subordinate's name, will be removed and shredded by the researcher after the ID number allocated to each subordinate has been matched with the questionnaire completed by that subordinate.

This will ensure the subordinate's anonymity.

Name of the person being rated: _____

Date: _____

Organisation ID #: _____ Person ID #: _____

Thank you again for your participation.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT AND DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

to be completed by supervisors

Instructions:

Please complete this questionnaire and return it with the questionnaires completed for each of your participating subordinates. **You need only complete sections A, B and C once.**

Section A

Supervisor's demographic information:

1. **Gender** Are you ☐Male? ☐Female?
2. **What is your age?**
☐20 or under ☐41 - 50
☐21 – 30 ☐51 - 60
☐31 – 40 ☐61 or over
3. **What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
☐ Not to high school (year 10) ☐ University (Bachelor)
☐ High school – to year 10 ☐ University (Masters)
☐ High school - year 11 /12 (College) ☐ University (Doctorate)
☐ TAFE College
4. **In which sector do you and your team work?**
☐A Agriculture, forestry and fishing ☐J Communications services
☐B Mining ☐K Finance and insurance
☐C Manufacturing ☐L Property and business services
☐D Electricity, gas and water supply ☐M Government administration and defence
☐E Construction ☐N Education
☐F Wholesale trade ☐O Health and community services
☐G Retail trade ☐P Cultural and recreational services
☐H Accommodation, cafes and restaurants ☐Q Personal and other services
☐I Transport and storage.
5. **What is the size of your organisation?**
☐ 10 or fewer employees
☐ 11 – 100 employees
☐ 101 or more employees
6. **What is the size of your team?**
☐ 1 to 5 employees
☐ 6 – 10 employees
☐ more than 10 employees

Appendix 4

PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A Instructions:

Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself **right now**. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to find a solution.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Second item addressing self-efficacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	Third item addressing self-efficacy	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	Fourth item addressing self-efficacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Fifth item addressing self-efficacy	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Sixth item addressing self-efficacy	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	Second item addressing hope.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	Third item addressing hope.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Fourth item addressing hope.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Fifth item addressing hope.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	Sixth item addressing hope.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.	1	2	3	4	5	6

14	Second item addressing resilience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	Third item addressing resilience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	Fourth item addressing resilience..	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	Fifth item addressing resilience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	Sixth item addressing resilience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	Second item addressing optimism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	Third item addressing optimism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	Fourth item addressing optimism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	Fifth item addressing optimism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	Sixth item addressing optimism.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please note: Items relating to PsyCap are limited to one question from each of the variables (self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism) to comply with copyright restrictions placed on the use of the PsyCap instrument.

Section B Instructions:

Below are statements that describe how you feel about your job **right now**. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, then answer the three questions below (Nos 28, 29 and 30) to the best of your recollection.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25	Overall I am satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	Overall I am satisfied with the type of work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	Overall I am satisfied with the organisation in which I work.	1	2	3	4	5	6

In the past six months

28	... how many days have you been absent from work due to physical health reasons? (e.g., illness, colds, flu, injury, medical condition etc.) days
29 how many days have you been absent from work due to work-related reasons? (e.g., feeling depressed, emotionally run down, stressed, taking a "sickie", unfair workload, or difficult work relationship) days
30 how many days have you been absent from work due to other reasons? (e.g., leave entitlements, personal commitments/appointments, but excluding flexi-time/ rostered / planned time in lieu). days

Section C Instructions:

Thinking of the past three months, how much of the time has your job made you feel each of the following. Use the following scale to indicate the frequency of each emotion.

Never 1	Occasionally 2	Some of the time 3	Much of the time 4	Most of the time 5	All of the time 6
------------	-------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------

		Never	Occasionally	Some of the time	Much of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
31	Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	Worried	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	Depressed	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	Contented	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	Optimistic	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	Tense	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	Miserable	1	2	3	4	5	6
42	Uneasy	1	2	3	4	5	6
43	Inspired	1	2	3	4	5	6
44	Alert	1	2	3	4	5	6
45	Excited	1	2	3	4	5	6
46	Determined	1	2	3	4	5	6
47	Happy	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section D Instructions:

Below is a list of statements describing different ways in which humour might be experienced or expressed. Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it. Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Totally disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Totally disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Totally agree
48	If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49	If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50	I let people laugh at me or make fun at my expense more than I should.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51	I don't have to work very hard at making other people laugh – I seem to be a naturally humorous person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52	If I am feeling upset or unhappy I usually try to think of something funny about the situation to make myself feel better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53	When telling jokes or saying funny things, I am usually not very concerned about how other people are taking it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54	I laugh and joke a lot with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

55	I do not like it when people use humour as a way of criticizing or putting someone down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56	I don't often say funny things to put myself down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57	I usually don't like to tell jokes or amuse people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
58	I often go overboard in putting myself down when I am making jokes or trying to be funny.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
59	I enjoy making people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60	If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
61	I never participate in laughing at others even if all my friends are doing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
62	It is my experience that thinking about some amusing aspect of a situation is often a very effective way of coping with problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
63	If I don't like someone, I often use humour or teasing to put them down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
64	If I am having problems or feeling unhappy, I often cover it up by joking around, so that even my closest friends don't know how I really feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
65	I usually can't think of witty things to say when I'm with other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
66	Even if something is really funny to me, I will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
67	Letting others laugh at me is my way of keeping my friends and family in good spirits.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section E Instructions:

Below is a list of statements describing different ways in which you might express or experience humour. Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it. Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Moderately agree 4	Strongly agree 5
------------------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------------	---------------------

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
68	I can often crack people up with the things I say.	1	2	3	4	5
69	Other people tell me that I say funny things.	1	2	3	4	5
70	I'm regarded as something of a wit by my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
71	I can say things in such a way as to make people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5
72	Sometimes I think up jokes or funny stories.	1	2	3	4	5
73	My clever sayings amuse others.	1	2	3	4	5
74	I'm confident that I can make other people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5
75	People look to me to say amusing things.	1	2	3	4	5
76	I use humour to entertain my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
77	I can ease a tense situation by saying something funny.	1	2	3	4	5
78	I can actually have some control over a group by my uses of humour.	1	2	3	4	5
79	People who tell jokes are a pain in the neck.	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
80	Calling somebody a ‘comedian’ is a real insult.	1	2	3	4	5
81	I like a good joke.	1	2	3	4	5
82	I’m uncomfortable when everyone is cracking jokes.	1	2	3	4	5
83	I dislike comics (comedians).	1	2	3	4	5
84	I appreciate those who generate humour.	1	2	3	4	5
85	Uses of humour help to put me at ease.	1	2	3	4	5
86	I can use wit to help adapt to many situations.	1	2	3	4	5
87	Trying to master situations through uses of humour is really dumb.	1	2	3	4	5
88	Humour helps me cope.	1	2	3	4	5
89	Humour is a lousy coping mechanism.	1	2	3	4	5
90	Uses of wit or humour help me master difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5
91	Coping by using humour is an elegant way of adapting.	1	2	3	4	5

Section F Instructions:

Below is a list of statements describing the level of fun you may experience in your current workplace.

Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it.

Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Moderately agree 4	Strongly agree 5
------------------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------------	---------------------

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
92	This is a fun place to work.	1	2	3	4	5
93	At my workplace, we try and have fun whenever we can.	1	2	3	4	5
94	Managers encourage employees to have fun at work.	1	2	3	4	5
95	We laugh a lot at my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
96	Sometimes I feel more like I'm playing than I'm working	1	2	3	4	5

Section G Instructions:

Below are statements that may or may not describe how you think about yourself. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements as they pertain to you. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
97	I am the life of the party.	1	2	3	4	5	6
98	I get chores done right away.	1	2	3	4	5	6
99	I have frequent mood swings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
100	I don't talk a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6
101	I often forget to put things back in their proper place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
102	I am relaxed most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
103	I talk to a lot of different people at parties.	1	2	3	4	5	6
104	I like order.	1	2	3	4	5	6
105	I get upset easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6
106	I keep in the background.	1	2	3	4	5	6
107	I make a mess of things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
108	I seldom feel 'blue'.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section H Instructions:

Below is a list of statements describing how you may feel about working for your current organisation.

Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it. Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Moderately agree 4	Strongly agree 5
------------------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------------	---------------------

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
109	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.	1	2	3	4	5
110	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
111	I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar.	1	2	3	4	5
112	This organisation really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance.	1	2	3	4	5

Section I Instructions:

Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it.

Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
113	In the past six months I have considered leaving my current employer.	1	2	3	4	5
114	In the past six months I have considered leaving the field of work in which I am currently employed.	1	2	3	4	5
115	I feel I will still have the same job that I am currently doing this time next year.	1	2	3	4	5
116	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

Section J Demographic Information:

1. Gender Are you ☐Male?
☐Female?
2. What is your age? ☐20 or under
☐21 - 30
☐31 - 40
☐41 - 50
☐51 - 60
☐61 or over
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
☐ Did not complete high school (year 10)
☐ High school – to year 10
☐ High school - year 11 /12 (College)
☐ TAFE College
☐ University (Bachelor)
☐ University (Masters)
☐ University (Doctorate)

That's it! Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix 5

Supervisors' questionnaire

Section A See Appendix 3, p. 204.

Section B Instructions:

Below is a list of statements describing the level of fun you may experience in your current workplace.

Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it.

Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Moderately agree 4	Strongly agree 5
------------------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------------	---------------------

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1	This is a fun place to work.	1	2	3	4	5
2	At my workplace, we try and have fun whenever we can.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Managers encourage employees to have fun at work.	1	2	3	4	5
4	We laugh a lot at my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Sometimes I feel more like I'm playing than I'm working.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C Instructions:

Below is a list of statements describing different ways in which you might express or experience humour.

Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it.

Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Moderately agree 4	Strongly agree 5
------------------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------------	---------------------

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
6	I can often crack people up with the things I say.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Other people tell me that I say funny things.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I'm regarded as something of a wit by my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I can say things in such a way as to make people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Sometimes I think up jokes or funny stories.	1	2	3	4	5
11	My clever sayings amuse others.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I'm confident that I can make other people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5
13	People look to me to say amusing things.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I use humour to entertain my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I can ease a tense situation by saying something funny.	1	2	3	4	5

16	I can actually have some control over a group by my uses of humour.	1	2	3	4	5
17	People who tell jokes are a pain in the neck.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Calling somebody a "comedian" is a real insult.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I like a good joke.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I'm uncomfortable when everyone is cracking jokes.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I dislike comics (comedians).	1	2	3	4	5
22	I appreciate those who generate humour.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Uses of humour help to put me at ease.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I can use wit to help adapt to many situations.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Trying to master situations through uses of humour is really dumb.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Humour helps me cope.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Humour is a lousy coping mechanism.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Uses of wit or humour help me master difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Coping by using humour is an elegant way of adapting.	1	2	3	4	5

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

Supervisors are requested to complete the following 12 questions in Section D of this questionnaire for EACH SUBORDINATE.

Section D has been provided for each subordinate.

However, it is important that you note that this page, which identifies the subordinate's name, will be removed and shredded by the researcher after the ID number allocated to each subordinate has been matched with the questionnaire completed by that subordinate.

This will ensure the subordinate's anonymity.

Name of the person being rated: _____

Date: _____

Organisation ID #: _____ Person ID #: _____

Thank you again for your participation.

Section D

Instructions:

Researcher use only O/N

☐

Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement as it pertains to this employee. Ideally ratings given will match the employee's most recent formal performance appraisal score, where relevant and appropriate.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	This person is sensitive to the needs, feelings and capabilities of others. He / she approach others in a non-threatening way and treats them with respect.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	This person works on projects as part of a team, exchanging ideas and contributing skills that complement those of the other team members. He / she fulfil commitments made to team members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	This person looks for ways to improve effectiveness by implementing new ideas and more efficient approaches.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	This person helps others with work-related problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	This person contributes to the organisation with creativity, innovation, effort and enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	This person has an interest in, and commitment to, the organisation as a whole, including taking part in discretionary roles to help the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	This person strives to learn and improve. He / she seeks out ways to better themselves and the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	This person's work performance is consistently above the standard of performance required for his / her position.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	This person displays an ability and willingness to exceed minimum work requirements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	This person aligns with and contributes to the organisation's purpose and goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	This person contributes to the organisation's productivity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	This person contributes to the organisation's stability, continuity and cohesion.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 6

Correspondence with Dr Rod Martin, University of Western Ontario, Canada

From: Rod Martin [<mailto:ramartin@uwo.ca>]

Sent: Friday, 17 June 2011 2:30 AM

To: Daryl Peebles

Subject: Re: HSQ query

Hi Daryl,

I'm glad to hear about your research on humour in the workplace. I'm attaching an abbreviated (20-item) version of the HSQ that I have developed (HSQ-20). This hasn't been published, but feel free to use it in your research. I'm also attaching statistics on reliabilities, intercorrelations, and correlations with the original 32-item version scales. These are based on nearly 1500 participants.

Good luck with your research!

By the way, I assume you have my book on the psychology of humor. If not, this would be a useful resource for you in writing your dissertation.

~ Rod Martin

Appendix 7

HSQ-20 detail

The data provided by Dr Martin (through personal correspondence, 2011, above) are from a sample of 1498 participants (38% male, 62% female); age range = 14 to 87 years. The internal consistencies of these four styles had alphas of 0.69 (affiliative); 0.71 (self-enhancing); 0.67 (aggressive) and 0.69 (self-defeating). The correlations of the short form scale with the original HSQ-32 scales, and among the HSQ-20 scales provided by Dr Martin, are shown below in Tables A7.1 and A7.2 respectively.

Table A7.1

	Affiliative	Self-enhancing	Aggressive	Self-defeating
Affiliative – S	.91	.46	.21	.048
Self-enhancing – S	.37	.91	.12	.09
Aggressive – S	.25	.12	.96	.29
Self-defeating – S	.08	.07	.26	.93

Correlations of short form scales with original HSQ-32 scales

Table A7.2

	Self-enhancing-S	Aggressive-S	Self-defeating-S
Affiliative – S	.37	.19	.05
Self-enhancing – S		.13	.08
Aggressive – S			.27

Correlations among HSQ-20 scales

Appendix 8

Correspondence with Mind Garden on behalf of Professor Fred Luthans et al.



To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material;

Instrument: Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ)

Authors: Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio & James B. Avey.

Copyright: "Copyright © 2007 Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ) Fred L. Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio & James B. Avey. All Rights Reserved in all medium."

for his/her thesis research.

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material.

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

Appendix 9

Table of means, standard deviations and correlations

	Mean	Std Dev	Self-efficacy	Hope	Resilience	Optimism	PsyCap #	Affiliative Humour	Self-enhancing Humour	Positive Humour #	PsyCap + Pos Hum #	Teamwork	Creativity	Contribution	Effort	Work Performance #	Job satisfaction	Turnover	Attachment	Work Attitude #	Fun Climate #
Self-efficacy	14.36	2.50	1.00																		
Hope	14.30	2.04	0.41	1.00																	
Resilience	14.73	1.90	0.30	0.38	1.00																
Optimism	9.29	1.58	0.33	0.59	0.46	1.00															
PsyCap #	52.68	5.97	0.74*	0.79*	0.69*	0.75*	1.00														
Affiliative Humour	25.16	4.85	0.25	0.28	0.16	0.18	0.30	1.00													
Self-enhancing Humour	18.18	4.16	0.19	0.24	0.28	0.34	0.34	0.40	1.00												
Positive Humour #	43.34	7.55	0.27	0.31	0.26	0.30	0.38*	0.86*	0.81*	1.00											
PsyCap + Pos Hum #	96.02	11.26	0.57*	0.63*	0.54*	0.60*	0.78*	0.74*	0.72*	0.87*	1.00										
Teamwork	15.06	2.47	0.13	0.15	0.10	0.28	0.21	0.00	0.09	0.05	0.14	1.00									
Creativity	14.60	2.61	0.23	0.11	0.11	0.27	0.24	0.03	0.07	0.06	0.17	0.76	1.00								
Contribution	14.92	2.54	0.17	0.12	0.13	0.24	0.22	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.13	0.79	0.79	1.00							
Effort	14.34	2.82	0.23	0.12	0.13	0.26	0.25	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.15	0.74	0.86	0.83	1.00						
Work Performance #	58.93	9.62	0.21	0.14	0.13	0.29	0.25*	0.01	0.07	0.04*	0.16*	0.89*	0.93*	0.92*	0.94*	1.00					
Job satisfaction	14.50	2.45	0.21	0.53	0.30	0.60	0.53	0.10	0.25	0.20	0.41	0.23	0.19	0.23	0.22	0.24	1.00				
Turnover	10.93	3.07	0.03	0.26	0.11	0.39	0.24	-0.02	0.20	0.10	0.19	0.22	0.20	0.22	0.19	0.22	0.62	1.00			
Attachment	15.07	2.83	0.13	0.34	0.20	0.47	0.36	0.02	0.12	0.08	0.24	0.21	0.16	0.24	0.21	0.22	0.61	0.52	1.00		
Work Attitude #	40.51	7.10	0.14	0.43	0.23	0.56*	0.43	0.03	0.22	0.14*	0.32*	0.26	0.21	0.27	0.24	0.27	0.86*	0.86*	0.84*	1.00	
Fun Climate #	15.43	3.11	0.08	0.37	0.24	0.45	0.35*	0.21	0.31	0.31*	0.39*	0.23	0.22	0.22	0.19	0.23*	0.55	0.40	0.32	0.49*	1.00
NOTES:	1. n=290; * p<0.05																				
	2. # indicates primary variables of interest.																				

Appendix 10

Result details

This appendix contains detailed results from all model testing beginning with tables of the tested latent variable data and continuing with the resultant data and graphs from the testing of each hypothesis.

A10.1 Testing the new latent variable Positive Humour

Table A10.1 (below) shows how the data fits with Martin et al.'s (2003) ascribed humour styles. This table shows the un-standardised loadings appearing along with standard errors, the ratio of the estimates to their standard errors, and two standardised estimates. The Est./S.E. column can be used to evaluate significance. If the absolute value of the number in this column is greater than 1.96, the estimate can be interpreted as significant at the .05 level. With the first item of each set of variables set at 1, in this case all of the unconstrained loading estimates (the remainder) are significant.

Table A10.1- Data for Positive Humour

Item	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	Two-Tailed P-Value
F1(Affiliative Humour) by				
A51	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
A54	0.736	0.082	8.942	0.000
A57	1.042	0.105	9.904	0.000
A59	0.489	0.065	7.573	0.000
A65	0.871	0.111	7.849	0.000
F2 (Self-enhancing humour) by				
A48	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
A52	1.104	0.130	8.473	0.000
A60	0.531	0.118	4.499	0.000
A62	0.754	0.097	7.782	0.000
Positive Humour by				
F1	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
F2	0.839	0.221	3.797	0.000

A10.2 Testing the new latent variable PsyCap to include Positive Humour

Table A10.2 (below) from *Mplus*, is the data from testing the PsyCap variable with Positive Humour included. It shows all Est./S.E. values as being greater than 1.96 and therefore these estimates interpreted as significant at the .05 level.

Table A10.2- Data for PsyCap including Positive Humour

Item	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	Two-Tailed P-Value
Positive Humour by				
Affiliative	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
Self-enhancing	1.180	0.279	4.231	0.000
PsyCap by				
Positive Humour	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
F1 (Self-Efficacy)	1.132	0.274	4.123	0.000
F2 (Hope)	1.500	0.334	4.493	0.000
F3 (Resilience)	0.354	0.117	3.025	0.002
F4 (Optimism)	1.520	0.366	4.159	0.000

A10.3 Testing the new latent variable Work Performance

Table A10.3 (below), from *Mplus*, is data from testing the new latent variable Work Performance (WorkPerf). It shows the absolute value of the number in the Est./S.E. being greater than 1.96 for all data. This estimate can be interpreted as significant at the .05 level. With the first item of each set of variables set at 1, in this case all of the unconstrained loading estimates (the remainder) are significant which indicates acceptable fit.

Table A10.3 – Data for Work Performance

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	Two-Tailed P-Value
F1 (Teamwork) by				
D1	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
D2	1.319	0.095	13.921	0.000
D4	1.201	0.093	12.885	0.000
F2 (Creativity) by				
D3	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
D5	1.184	0.068	17.319	0.000
D7	1.126	0.072	15.546	0.000
F3 (Contribution) by				
D10	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
D11	0.975	0.039	25.034	0.000
D12	1.039	0.046	22.407	0.000
F4 (Discretionary effort) by				
D6	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
D8	1.076	0.069	15.528	0.000
D9	1.197	0.070	16.989	0.000
WorkPerf by				
F1	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
F2	1.221	0.106	11.559	0.000
F3	1.269	0.101	12.545	0.000
F4	1.326	0.119	11.098	0.000

A10.4 Testing the new latent variable Work Attitude

Referring to Table A10.4 (below), this data from *MPlus* is the result of testing the new latent variable Work Attitude (WorkAtt). All the Est/S.E. values for all data were again greater than 1.96 so these estimates were interpreted as significant at the .05 level.

Table A10.4 – Data for Work Attitude

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	Two-Tailed P-Value
F1 (job satisfaction) by				
Q25	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
Q26	0.824	0.057	14.477	0.000
Q27	0.872	0.075	11.599	0.000
F2 (organisational attachment) by				
Q109	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
Q110	1.972	0.285	6.907	0.000
F3 (intention to stay) by				
Q115	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
Q113	1.936	0.273	7.095	0.000
WORKATT BY				
F1	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
F2	0.411	0.073	5.617	0.000
F3	0.721	0.108	6.675	0.000

A10.5 H₁:1 Positive Humour and Work Performance

Hypothesis: Positive humour is positively related to work performance.

Method: A linear model was fitted to the data with hope as the dependant variable and positive humour as the independent variable.

The fitted equation is: $\text{WorkPerf} = c + \beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ where WorkPerf = work performance; c is a constant and $\beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ is the variable positive humour.

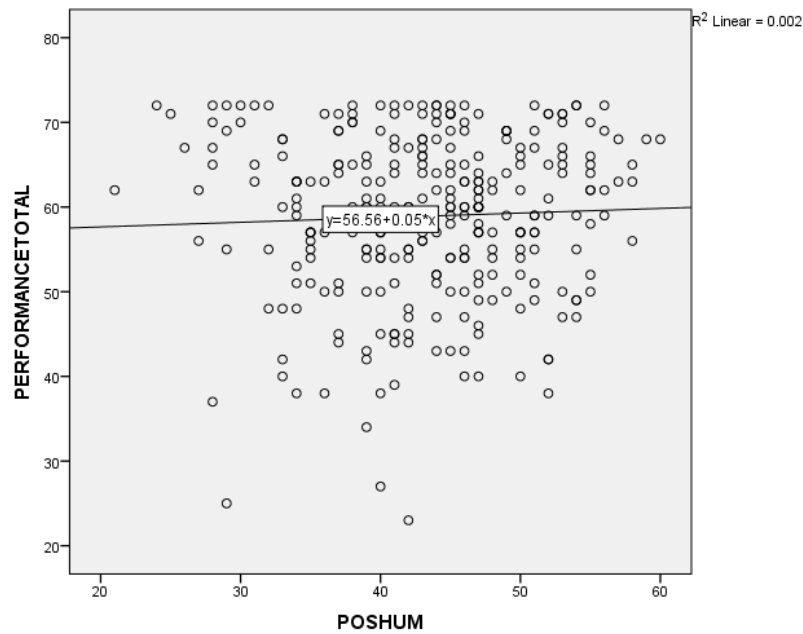
The null hypothesis is: $H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$
and $H_1 : \beta_1 > 0$

Result: A Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) indicates that a positive relationship, albeit very weak, exists between these two variables. As $p = .467$ and is therefore >0.01 , the correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) supporting the null hypothesis. Table A10.5 and Figure A10.1 from the SPSS output, (below) show this result.

Table A10.5

Pearson Correlation	.043
P value (sig.)	0.467
R^2	0.002
β coefficient (β_1)	0.05
Comment	The null hypothesis is supported. The hypothesis $H_{1:1}$ - <i>Positive humour is positively related to Work Performance</i> is therefore rejected.

Figure A10.1



The regression analysis from the SPSS output is shown graphically in Figure A10.1 above. R^2 gives an indication of how much of the observed data is explained by the linear regression. The above model explains 0.002 (i.e. approximately 0.2%) of the observed data. This indicates that positive humour by itself is not an indicator of work performance. There is however a positive association with the β coefficient (β_1) = 0.05 (i.e. > 0). But this correlation is not statistically significant. Therefore the hypothesis $H_{1:1}$ *Positive humour is positively related to work performance* is rejected.

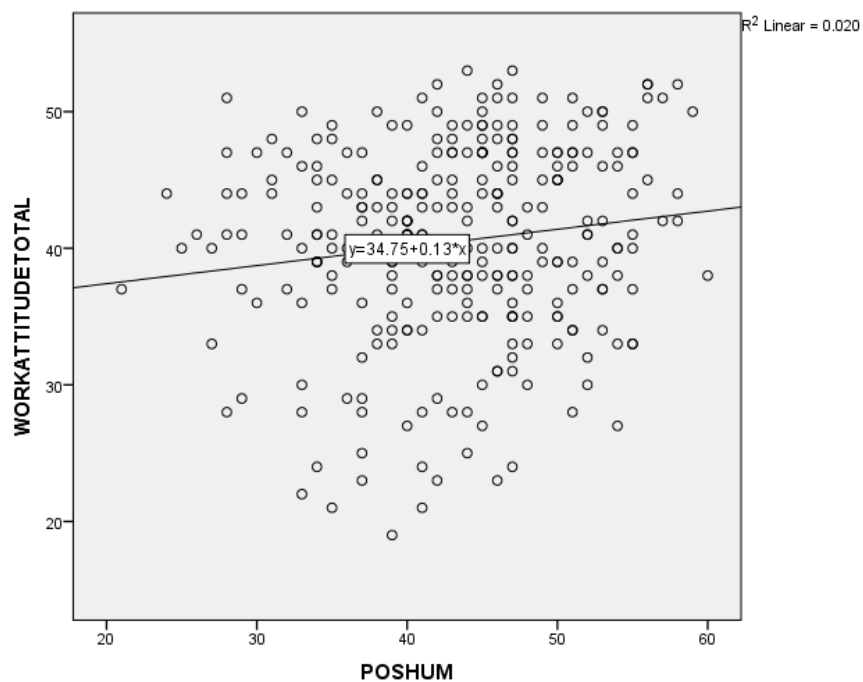
This process is replicated below for hypotheses $H_{1:2}$ to $H_{1:6}$ with graphs and tables showing the results.

A10.6 H₁:2 Positive Humour and Work Attitudes

Table A10.6

Pearson Correlation	.141
P value (sig.)	0.016
R ²	0.020
β coefficient (β_1)	0.13
Comment	With a p-value of .016 this correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the hypothesis H ₁ :2- <i>Positive humour is positively related to work attitude.</i>

Figure A10.2



A 10.7 Using ‘Fun Climate’ as a moderator – a brief explanation

Before analysing the regressions that are testing the hypotheses suggesting that a ‘Fun Climate’ may have a moderating effect on existing relationships, a brief explanation is necessary.

A new latent variable Fun Climate (FunClim) was introduced in Chapter 5.1.4.3. Its purpose was to determine whether or not a workplace culture that could be described as having a ‘fun climate’ had a moderating effect on the influence of positive humour (PosHum) on work attitude (WorkAtt) and performance (WorkPerf). ‘Moderation’ is as described as the changing of a relationship as a function of some moderating influence (Little et al., 2007). In this case, does the existence of FunClim moderate the influence of PosHum on WorkAtt and WorkPerf?

Regressions performed to investigate the potential moderating effect of a fun climate on the areas of interest using the complete available data set. However, as discussed earlier, using data from teams in which there is a consensus as to the climate of that team, is more meaningful. Therefore the data was reanalysed using a truncated data set, eliminating the teams in which there was no agreement on the prevailing ‘climate’.

A10.8 H₁:3 Fun Climate, Positive Humour and Work Performance

The SPSS output described above for H₁:1 showed that positive humour is not positively related to work performance. Adding the variable Fun Climate into the equation:

$$\text{WorkPerf} = \text{PosHum} + \text{FunClim} + (\text{PosHum} * \text{FunClim}) + e$$

where WorkPerf is the outcome variable of interest, e is the assumed error term, PosHum and FunClim are the first-order predictor variables, and (PosHum x FunClim) is the newly formed multiplicative term. This regression equation specifies that the slope of the line relating PosHum to WorkPerf changes at different levels of FunClim.

The model summary from SPSS gave an initial R² of 0.055. Retesting with non-agreeing groups removed gave an R² of 0.048. The Coefficients tables from SPSS are shown in Table A10.7 and Table A10.8 (below) in which Table A10.8 summarises the results after the non-agreeing teams were removed.

Table A10.7

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	45.755	14.839		3.083	.002
	PosHum	.040	.353	.031	.113	.910
	FunClim	.968	.955	.313	1.013	.312
	PHxFC	-.005	.022	-.109	-.232	.816

a. Dependent Variable: WorkPerf

Table A10.8

Coefficients (after r_{wg} analysis on Fun Climate) with Work Performance as the dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	32.500	19.500		1.667	.097
PosHum	.347	.462	.269	.751	.453
FunClimate	1.762	1.228	.499	1.435	.153
PHxFC	-.023	.029	-.465	-.818	.414

a. Dependent Variable: WorkPerf

The significance levels (Sig) are all greater than 0.01 for both the full data set and the truncated data after the removal of teams for whom there was no ‘fun climate’ consensus.

This indicates strong support for the null hypothesis thus rejecting hypothesis H_{1:3} – *The existence of a Fun Climate in a workplace moderates the effect that positive humour has on work performance.* However it is interesting to note that the removal of the non-agreeing teams did have a positive effect, albeit insignificant, on the results.

A10.9 H₁:4 Fun Climate, Positive Humour and Work Attitude

The SPSS output described in H₁:2 showed that positive humour is positively related to work attitude. Adding the variable Fun Climate into the equation:

$$\text{WorkAtt} = \text{PosHum} + \text{FunClim} + (\text{PosHum} * \text{FunClim}) + e$$

where WorkAtt is the outcome variable of interest, e is the assumed error term, PosHum and FunClim are the first-order predictor variables, and (PosHum x FunClim) is the newly formed multiplicative term. This regression equation specifies that the slope of the line relating PosHum to WorkAtt changes at different levels of FunClim.

The model summary from SPSS gave an R² of 0.256. Retesting with non-agreeing groups gave removed an R² of 0.214. The Coefficients tables from SPSS are shown in Table A10.9 and Table A10.10 (below) in which Table A10.10 summarises the results after the non-agreeing teams were removed.

Table A10.9

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21.098	9.139		2.309	.022
	PosHum	-.006	.217	-.007	-.027	.979
	FunClim	1.035	.588	.482	1.758	.080
	pxF	.001	.014	.031	.074	.941

a. Dependent Variable: WorkAtt

Table A10.10

Coefficients (after r_{wg} analysis on Fun Climate) with Work Attitude as the dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	20.145	12.826		1.571	.117
PosHum	.045	.304	.048	.147	.883
FunClimate	1.344	.808	.526	1.664	.097
PHxFC	-.004	.019	-.099	-.191	.848

a. Dependent Variable: WorkAtt

The significance levels (Sig) are all > 0.01 for both the full data set and the truncated data after the removal of teams for whom there was no climate consensus.

This indicates strong support for the null hypothesis thus rejecting $H_1:4$ – *The existence of a Fun Climate in a workplace moderates the effect that positive humour has on work attitude.*

A10.10 H_{1:5} The moderating effect of a team's supervisor's sense of humour (MSHS) on the relationship between Positive Humour and Work Performance

Using WorkPerf as the dependent variable, the other variable entered were SupvMSHS, Positive Humour and the new multiplicative term PHxMSHS (i.e. Positive Humour x the Supervisors' Multidimensional Sense of Humor). As shown in Table A10.11 below, the R² of 0.021 suggests that the model only explains 2.1 per cent of the observed data and with the significance levels (Sig.) all above 0.05 (Table A10.12), the null hypothesis is supported. Thus the hypothesis H_{1:5} - *A supervisor's sense of humour in a workplace moderates the effect that positive humour has on work performance* is rejected.

Table A10.11

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.144 ^a	.021	.011	9.56570

a. Predictors: (Constant), PHxMSHS, SupvMSHS, PosHumPH

Table A10.12

Coefficients with WorkPerf as the dependent variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	69.826	25.795		2.707	.007
	PosHumPH	-.480	.578	-.377	-.830	.407
	SupvMSHS	-.148	.294	-.160	-.504	.615
	PHxMSHS	.006	.007	.517	.919	.359

a. Dependent Variable: WorkPerf

A10.11H_{1:6} The moderating effect of a team's supervisor's sense of humour (MSHS) on the relationship between Positive Humour and Work Attitude

Using WorkAtt as the dependent variable, the other variable entered were SupvMSHS, Positive Humour and the new multiplicative term PHxMSHS (i.e. Positive Humour x the Supervisors' Multidimensional Sense of Humor). As shown in Table A10.13 below, the R² of 0.038 suggests that the model only explains 3.8 per cent of the observed data and with the significance levels (Sig.) all marginally over 0.05, (Table A10.14) the null hypothesis is supported. Thus the hypothesis H_{1:6} - *A supervisor's sense of humour in a workplace moderates the effect that positive humour has on work attitude* is rejected.

Table A10.13

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194 ^a	.038	.028	7.00152

a. Predictors: (Constant), PHxMSHS, SupvMSHS, PosHumPH

Table A10.14

Coefficients with WorkAtt as the dependent variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	69.696	18.881		3.691	.000
	PosHumPH	-.740	.423	-.787	-1.748	.082
	SupvMSHS	-.400	.215	-.585	-1.857	.064
	PHxMSHS	.010	.005	1.156	2.073	.039

a. Dependent Variable: WorkAtt

A10.12 H₁:7 Positive Humour and hope

Hypothesis: Positive humour is positively related to hope.

Method: A linear model was fitted to the data with hope as the dependant variable and positive humour as the independent variable.

The fitted equation is: $H = c + \beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ where $H = \text{hope}$; c is a constant and $\beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ is the variable 'positive humour'.

The null hypothesis is: $H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$

and $H_1 : \beta_1 > 0$

This linear equation describes how 'hope' scores changes or each unit of change in 'positive humour' (PosHum) as influenced by β_1 (the slope). This equation describes the relationship between the two variables (Hope and PosHum) with the strength of that relationship.

Result: A Pearson Correlation of 0.311 indicates a positive relationship exists between these two variables. As $p = .000$ and is thus < 0.01 , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) and indicates that the data is consistent with the H_1 hypothesis; that is the correlation is not zero. Table A10.15, from the SPSS output, (below) shows this result.

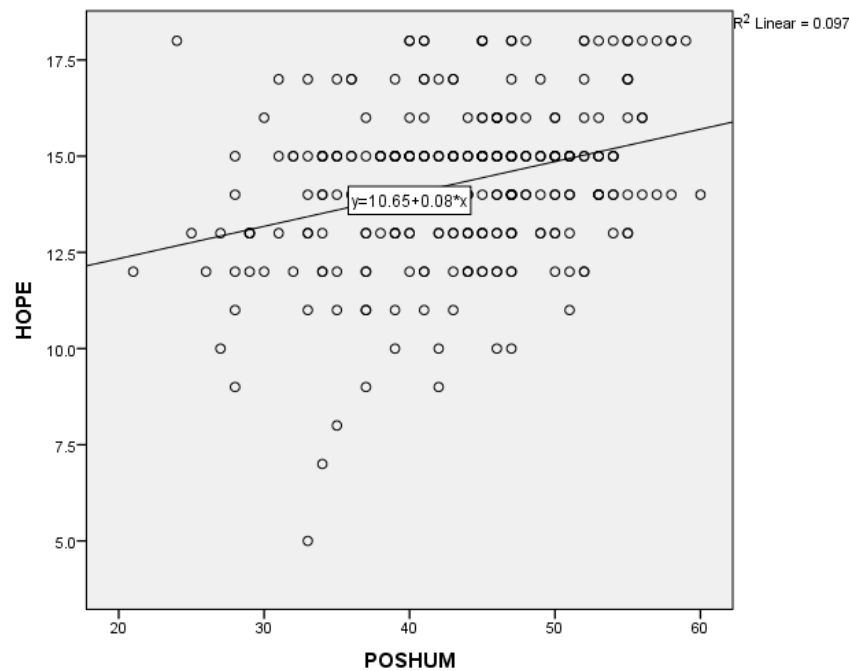
Table A10.15

Pearson Correlation	.311**
P value (sig.)	0.000
R ²	0.097
β coefficient β_1	0.08
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the $H_{1:7}$ hypothesis - <i>Positive humour is positively related to hope.</i> ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

The regression analysis from the SPSS output is shown graphically in Figure A10.3. R^2 gives an indication of how much of the observed data is explained by the linear regression. The

value of R^2 is expressed as a fraction between 0.0 and 1.0 wherein 0.0 indicates that knowing X does not help predict Y, and should $R^2 = 1.0$ all points would lie on a straight line precisely making Y predictable from a known X.

Figure A10.3



This model graphed above explains 0.097 (i.e. approximately 10%) of the observed data. This indicates that positive humour by itself is not a very strong indicator of hope. Never-the-less the positive association is statistically significant. As the β coefficient (β_1) = 0.08 (i.e. > 0) the null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the H_1 hypothesis: *Positive humour is positively related to hope*. Using the same rationale, this process was replicated for $H_{1:8}$, $H_{1:9}$, $H_{1:10}$ and $H_{1:11}$. These results follow.

A10.13 H₁:8 Positive Humour and optimism

Hypothesis: Positive humour is positively related to optimism.

Method: A linear model was fitted to the data with optimism as the dependant variable and positive humour as the independent variable.

The fitted equation is: $O = c + \beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ where O = optimism; c is a constant and $\beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ is the variable 'positive humour'.

The null hypothesis is: $H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$ and $H_1 : \beta_1 > 0$

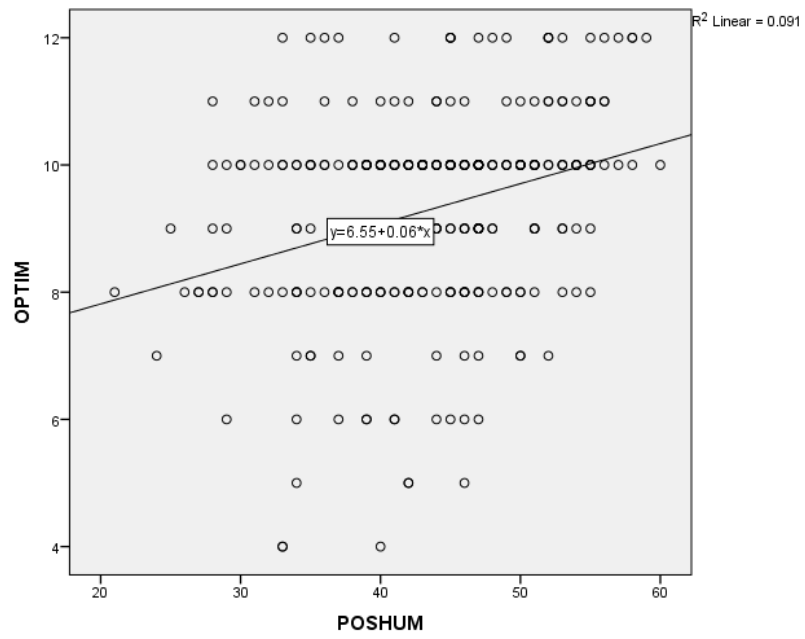
This linear equation describes how 'optimism' scores changes or each unit of change in 'positive humour' (PosHum) as influenced by β_1 (the slope). This equation describes the relationship between the two variables (Optimism and PosHum) with the strength of that relationship.

Result: A Pearson Correlation of 0.301 indicates a positive relationship exists between these two variables. As $p = .000$ and is thus < 0.01 , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) and indicates that the data is consistent with the H_1 hypothesis; that is the correlation is not zero. Table A10.16 and Figure A10.4 from the SPSS output, (below) show this result.

Table A10.16

Pearson Correlation	.301
P value (sig.)	0.000
R^2	0.071
β coefficient (β_1)	0.09
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the H ₁ :8 hypothesis - <i>Positive humour is positively related to optimism.</i>

Figure A10.4



A10.14 H₁:9 Positive Humour and resilience

Hypothesis: Positive humour is positively related to resilience.

Method: A linear model was fitted to the data with resilience as the dependant variable and positive humour as the independent variable.

The fitted equation is: $R = c + \beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ where R = resilience; c is a constant and $\beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ is the variable 'positive humour'.

The null hypothesis is: $H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$ and $H_1 : \beta_1 > 0$

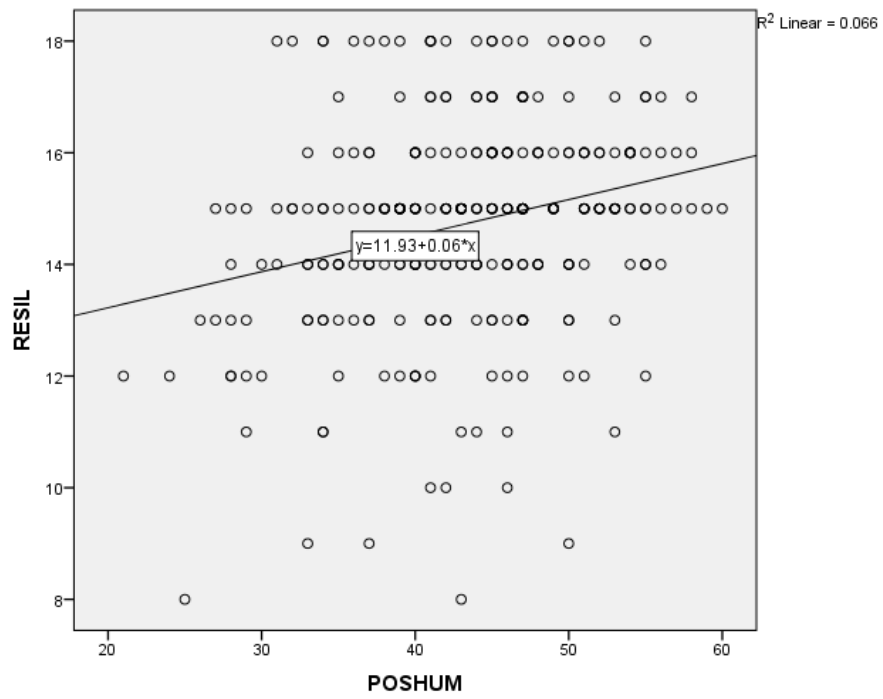
This linear equation describes how 'resilience' scores changes or each unit of change in 'positive humour' (PosHum) as influenced by β_1 (the slope). This equation describes the relationship between the two variables (Resilience and PosHum) with the strength of that relationship.

Result: A Pearson Correlation of 0.257 indicates a positive relationship exists between these two variables. As $p = .000$ and is thus <0.01 , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) and indicates that the data is consistent with the H_1 hypothesis; that is the correlation is not zero. Table A10.17 and Figure A10.5 from the SPSS output, (below) show this result.

Table A10.17

Pearson Correlation	.257
P value (sig.)	0.000
R^2	0.066
β coefficient (β_1)	0.06
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the $H_{1:9}$ hypothesis - <i>Positive humour is positively related to resilience.</i>

Figure A10.5



A10.15 H₁:10 Positive Humour and self-efficacy

Hypothesis: Positive humour is positively related to self-efficacy.

Method: A linear model was fitted to the data with self-efficacy as the dependant variable and positive humour as the independent variable.

The fitted equation is: $C = c + \beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ where C = self-efficacy; c is a constant and $\beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ is the variable 'positive humour'.

The null hypothesis is: $H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$ and $H_1 : \beta_1 > 0$

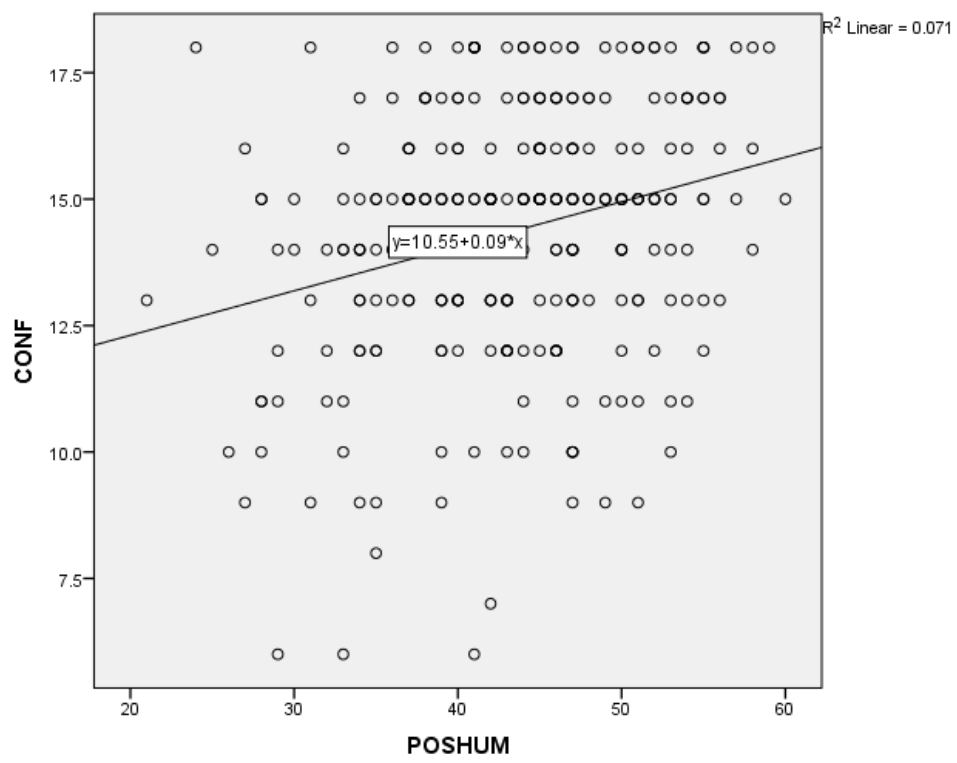
This linear equation describes how 'self-efficacy' scores changes or each unit of change in 'positive humour' (PosHum) as influenced by β_1 (the slope). This equation describes the relationship between the two variables (Self-efficacy and PosHum) with the strength of that relationship.

Result: A Pearson Correlation of 0.266 indicates a positive relationship exists between these two variables. As $p = .000$ and is thus <0.01 , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) and indicates that the data is consistent with the H_1 hypothesis; that is the correlation is not zero. Table A10.18 and Figure A10.6 from the SPSS output, (below) show this result.

Table A10.18

Pearson Correlation	.266
P value (sig.)	0.000
R^2	0.071
β coefficient β_1	0.09
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the $H_{1:10}$ hypothesis - <i>Positive humour is positively related to self-efficacy.</i>

Figure A10.6



A10.16 H_{1.11} Positive Humour and PsyCap

Hypothesis: Positive humour is positively related to PsyCap.

Method: A linear model was fitted to the data with PsyCap as the dependant variable and positive humour as the independent variable.

The fitted equation is: $PC = c + \beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ where $PC = \text{PsyCap}$; c is a constant and $\beta_1 \text{PosHum}$ is the variable 'positive humour'.

The null hypothesis is: $H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$ and $H_1 : \beta_1 > 0$

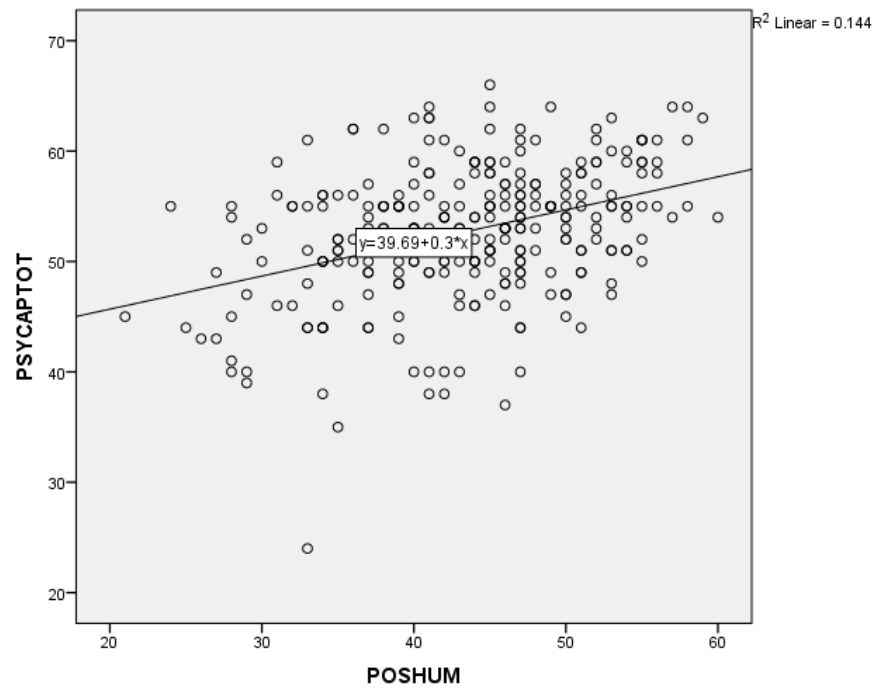
This linear equation describes how 'PsyCap' scores changes or each unit of change in 'positive humour' (PosHum) as influenced by β_1 (the slope). This equation describes the relationship between the two variables (PsyCap and PosHum) with the strength of that relationship.

Result: A Pearson Correlation of 0.379 indicates a positive relationship exists between these two variables. As $p = .000$ and is thus < 0.01 , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) and indicates that the data is consistent with the H_1 hypothesis; that is the correlation is not zero. Table A10.19 and Figure A10.7 from the SPSS output, (below) show this result.

Table A10.19

Pearson Correlation	.379
P value (sig.)	0.000
R^2	0.144
β coefficient (β_1)	0.3
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the $H_{1.11}$ hypothesis - <i>Positive humour is positively related to PsyCap.</i>

Figure A10.7

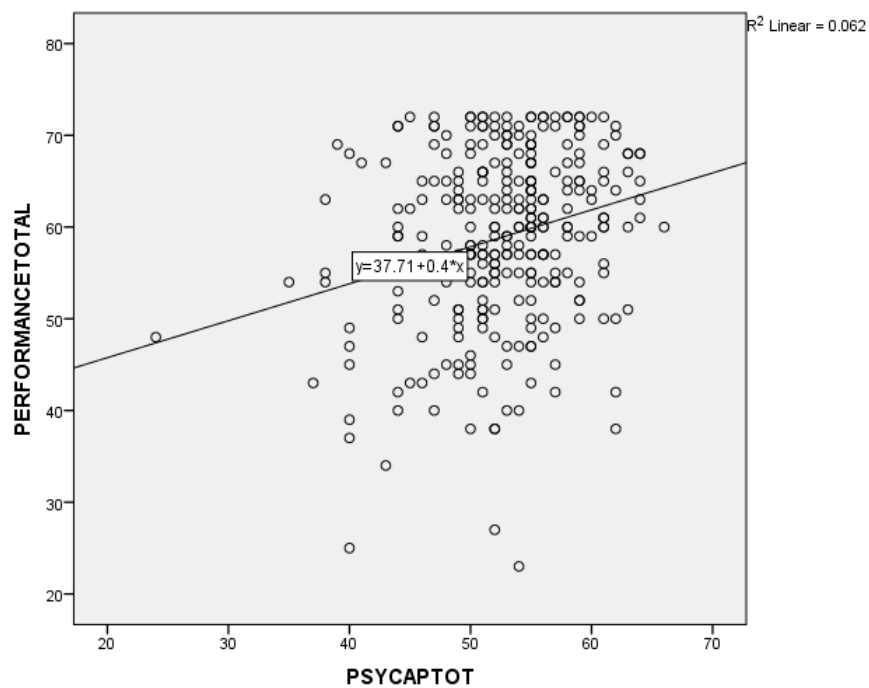


A10.17 H₁:12 PsyCap and Work Performance

Table A10.20

Pearson Correlation	.250
P value (sig.)	0.000
R ²	0.062
β coefficient (β ₁)	0.4
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the hypothesis H ₁ :12 - <i>PsyCap is positively related to work performance.</i>

Figure A10.8



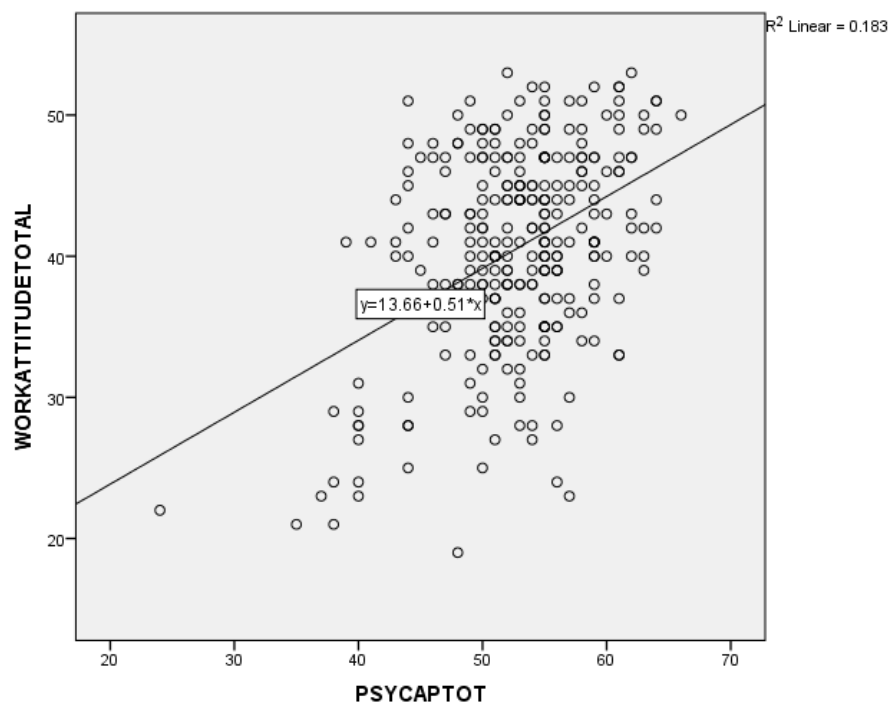
A10.18 H₁:13 PsyCap and Work Attitudes

A strong relationship was shown to exist between PsyCap and Work Attitudes. Table A10.21 below shows the correlations and Figure A10.9 shows the relationship graphically.

Table A10.21

Pearson Correlation	.428
P value (sig.)	0.000
R ²	0.183
β coefficient (β ₁)	0.51
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the hypothesis H ₁ :13 - <i>PsyCap is positively related to work attitudes.</i>

Figure A10.9



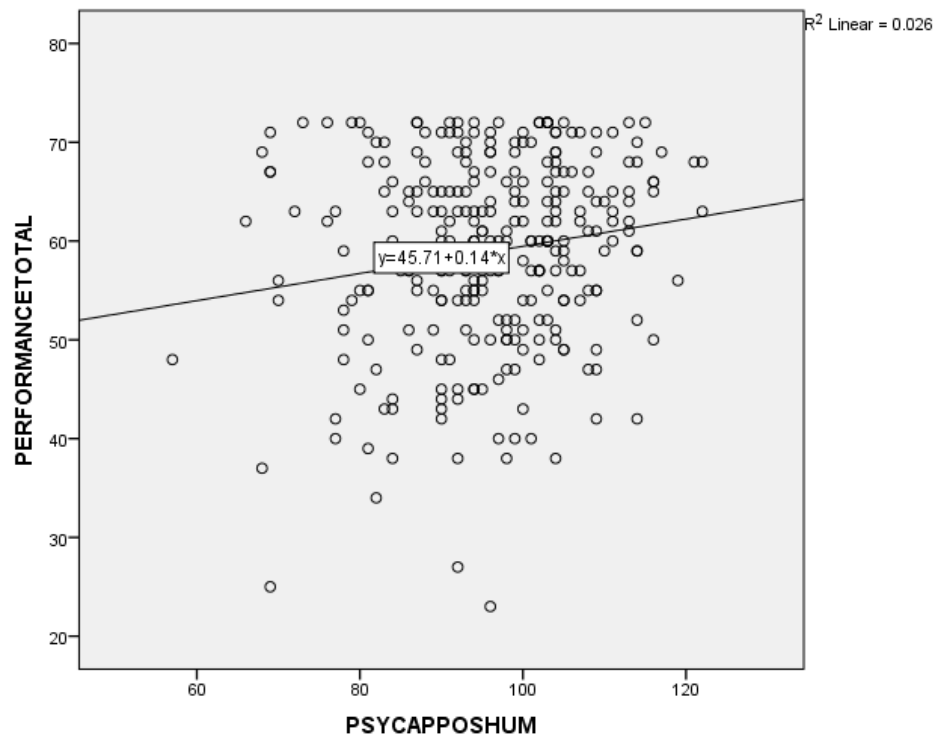
A10.19 H₁:14 PsyCap including Positive Humour and Work Performance

The addition of Positive Humour into the PsyCap construct for this analysis actually weakened the relationship that existed between Work Performance and PsyCap alone. However the resultant data (Table A10.22) remains consistent with the hypothesis H₁:14 - *PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work performance*. This is shown graphically in Figure A10.10

Table A10.22

Pearson Correlation	.161
P value (sig.)	0.006
R ²	0.026
β coefficient (β ₁)	0.14
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. Given the relative strength of the relationship between PsyCap and work performance (see H ₁ :12 above) and the relative weakness between positive humour work performance (see H ₁ :1), it would be reasonable to deduce that the significant influence on the relationship between PsyCap including positive humour and workplace performance is attributable to the PsyCap component.

Figure A10.10



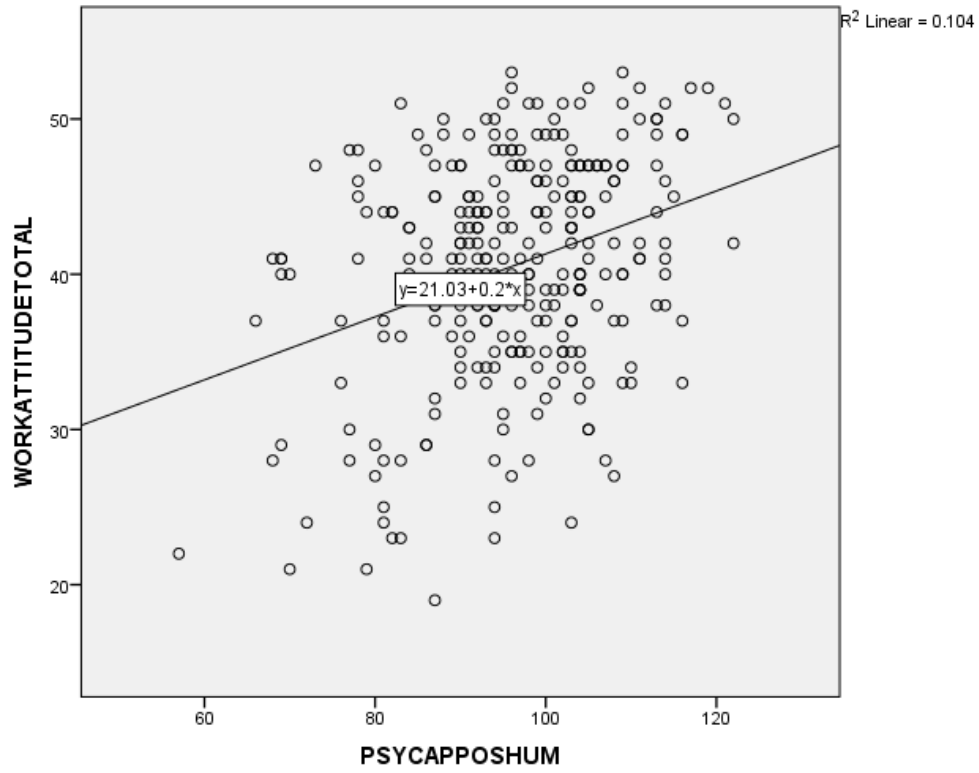
A10.20**H₁:15 PsyCap including Positive Humour and Work Attitudes**

A strong relationship was shown to already exist between PsyCap and Work Attitudes. The addition of Positive Humour into the PsyCap construct for this analysis resulted in a lower Pearson Correlation (from 0.428 to 0.322), a lower R^2 (0.183 to 0.104) and a lower β coefficient (0.51 to 0.02). However, the data (Table A10.23) still supported the hypothesis. The result is shown graphically in Figure A10.11 below.

Table A10.23

Pearson Correlation	.322
P value (sig.)	0.000
R^2	0.104
β coefficient (β_1)	0.02
Comment	The null hypothesis is rejected. The data is consistent with the H ₁ :15: <i>PsyCap including positive humour is positively related to work attitude.</i>

Figure A10.11



Appendix 11 Within group reliability analysis

Actual Team No	AVE Item #1	AVE Item #2	AVE Item #3	AVE Item #4	VAR Item #1	VAR Item #2	VAR Item #3	VAR Item #4	Average of item variances	Overall RWG:	Supervisor Ave Score	Ave of Indiv Averages
1	4.25	4.50	3.88	4.38	0.50	0.29	0.98	0.27	0.51	0.92	4.25	4.25
2	3.80	4.00	3.20	4.20	0.20	0.50	0.20	0.20	0.27	0.96	4.00	3.80
3	4.56	4.56	4.22	4.56	0.28	0.28	0.44	0.28	0.32	0.95	4.75	4.47
4	4.17	4.17	4.00	4.17	0.17	0.57	0.40	0.57	0.42	0.94	4.75	4.13
5	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	5.00	5.00
6	4.13	4.00	3.88	4.38	0.13	0.29	0.41	0.27	0.27	0.96	3.75	4.09
7	2.60	2.60	2.20	3.20	1.80	1.80	1.20	0.70	1.38	0.65	2.75	2.65
8	3.88	3.38	3.13	3.88	0.70	0.84	0.41	0.13	0.52	0.92	4.00	3.56
9	4.00	4.00	3.33	4.33	1.00	1.00	0.33	0.33	0.67	0.89	3.75	3.92
10	4.20	4.40	3.20	4.00	0.62	0.49	1.29	0.89	0.82	0.85	3.00	3.95
11	4.00	4.64	4.09	4.55	1.20	0.25	0.49	0.47	0.60	0.90	4.50	4.32
13	3.00	2.50	2.75	3.75	0.67	0.33	0.92	0.25	0.54	0.92	4.50	3.00
14	4.00	4.33	4.00	4.33	1.00	0.33	1.00	0.33	0.67	0.89	4.50	4.17
15	4.00	4.00	4.43	4.29	0.33	0.33	0.29	0.24	0.30	0.96	5.00	4.18
17	4.00	4.33	4.00	4.67	1.00	1.33	0.00	0.33	0.67	0.89	4.25	4.25
18	3.75	3.75	3.13	3.38	0.79	0.50	1.55	0.55	0.85	0.84	4.50	3.50
20	3.80	4.20	3.40	3.40	0.70	0.70	0.30	0.80	0.63	0.90	3.50	3.70
21	3.14	3.86	2.57	3.43	1.48	1.81	1.29	1.95	1.63	0.48	1.00	3.25
22	4.00	3.86	3.57	3.57	0.67	0.48	0.62	0.95	0.68	0.89	5.00	3.75
23	4.44	3.89	3.78	4.11	0.28	0.11	0.44	0.86	0.42	0.94	2.00	4.06
24	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.80	4.00	3.00
25	4.60	4.40	4.00	4.80	0.30	0.80	0.50	0.20	0.45	0.93	4.25	4.45

Actual Team No	AVE Item #1	AVE Item #2	AVE Item #3	AVE Item #4	VAR Item #1	VAR Item #2	VAR Item #3	VAR Item #4	Average of item variances	Overall RWG:	Supervisor Ave Score	Ave of Indiv Averages
26	4.40	4.20	4.00	4.20	0.80	0.70	0.50	0.70	0.68	0.89	4.25	4.20
27	3.50	3.50	2.50	3.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.38	0.95	3.25	3.13
28	3.69	3.63	3.00	3.25	0.23	0.38	0.93	0.33	0.47	0.93	3.75	3.39
29	4.50	4.75	4.50	4.50	1.00	0.25	0.33	0.33	0.48	0.93	4.75	4.56
35	4.80	4.60	4.20	4.40	0.20	0.30	0.70	0.30	0.38	0.95	4.75	4.50
36	4.33	4.33	3.67	4.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.95	4.75	4.17
37	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.25	0.00	0.67	0.67	0.40	0.94	4.50	4.06
38	3.86	3.71	3.14	3.86	0.81	0.57	1.48	0.48	0.83	0.85	3.50	3.64
39	4.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.38	0.95	3.75	3.63
40	3.83	3.83	3.50	3.83	0.97	0.57	1.50	0.97	1.00	0.80	3.50	3.75
41	4.43	4.29	4.14	4.29	0.29	0.24	0.48	0.57	0.39	0.94	5.00	4.29
45	4.00	4.00	4.33	4.33	0.00	1.00	0.33	0.33	0.42	0.94	3.75	4.17
46	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.42	1.30	0.57	0.64	0.99	0.87	0.84	4.00	3.60
48	4.00	3.89	3.89	4.11	0.50	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.58	0.91	5.00	3.97
51	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.50	0.33	0.33	0.92	0.33	0.48	0.93	4.25	4.44
53	2.86	2.43	2.57	2.71	1.81	1.29	1.29	1.57	1.49	0.58	3.75	2.64
54	3.00	4.00	2.33	3.33	1.00	1.00	1.33	0.33	0.92	0.83	3.75	3.17
55	4.50	4.75	3.75	4.75	0.33	0.25	1.58	0.25	0.60	0.90	4.50	4.44
57	3.67	4.33	4.00	4.00	2.33	0.33	1.00	0.00	0.92	0.83	3.50	4.00
58	4.11	3.78	3.44	4.22	0.36	0.94	0.78	0.44	0.63	0.90	3.75	3.89
59	3.60	3.40	2.60	3.40	0.30	0.80	0.80	0.30	0.55	0.91	4.25	3.25
60	3.00	3.20	3.20	3.60	1.00	0.70	0.70	0.30	0.68	0.89	4.00	3.25
63	3.80	3.40	3.60	3.60	0.70	1.30	0.30	0.30	0.65	0.89	2.25	3.60
64	4.00	3.80	2.80	3.60	0.50	1.20	2.70	2.30	1.68	0.44	3.25	3.55
65	4.43	4.29	3.14	4.57	0.29	1.24	0.48	0.29	0.57	0.91	4.25	4.11
66	4.50	4.67	4.33	4.83	0.70	0.27	0.67	0.17	0.45	0.93	4.00	4.58
67	4.25	4.25	3.75	4.50	0.25	0.25	0.92	0.33	0.44	0.93	4.00	4.19

Appendix 12

A cultural reflection – looking at Australian humour use and preferences

This current study was specifically examining Positive Humour as positivity, through Positive Psychology, is the foundation upon which PsyCap is built. However the researcher was also curious to observe what impact, if any negative humour had on the outcomes measured. Surprisingly, negative humour did not have a significant impact on the workplace performance and attitude indicators and this was cause for greater reflection. One explanation may be the general acceptance within the Australian culture of some forms of the humour which Martin et al., (2003) deem to be maladaptive – i.e. aggressive and self-defeating humour.

Milner Davis (2009) noted that ‘for Australians, using and appreciating (or at least tolerating) humour is not so much permitted as compulsory.’ The point of cultural difference is how Australians use humour – not the nature of the humour used. Milner Davis (2009) suggests that unlike many other cultures, the Australian culture gives unquestionable social permission for a ‘comic challenge’ to be inflicted upon all comers; not only family, friends and work colleagues but even strangers and (especially) authority figures.

Australia’s convict heritage nurtured the ‘larrikin’ humour that became an accepted part of the nation’s culture. This form of humour affirms the country’s legitimate independent status and in doing so rejects the historical overlord persona and privilege of the British authorities. This subversive form of humour is ‘a mixture of defiance and apology for being there’ (McCallum 1998, p. 207).

It is almost obligatory within this culture to ‘take the mickey’, or to give this Irish phrase its equivalent Australian label ‘take the piss’. Milner Davis (2007) explains that the more polite Irish expression was probably from the rhyming slang for piss; Mickey Bliss. The Australian use of this expression was simply blunter. Extending this terminology even further, the gentle ribbing culturally accepted within Australia is also known as ‘shit stirring’.

An example noted by the researcher when distributing questionnaires for this study is recorded here for reference. On entering the ‘smoko room’ of a construction company participating in the survey at the end of a working week, the researcher was greeted with this conversation (paraphrased and actual name not used).

Worker 1: Hey Bill. The bloke’s here to talk about joking in the workplace.

Worker 2: You’re the only joke in this workplace.

Worker 1: Yeah. Right. And turn the bloody music down will ya?

(to researcher) You know, it’s compulsory to listen to 60s and 70s music if you want to work here.

Worker 3: Bill’s caught in a time warp.

Worker 2: Yep – when music had melody and our pop stars had brains.

Worker 3: Could be worse. He’s old enough to remember Vera Lynn.

Worker 1: Vera who?

Worker 3: Vera Lynn. A singer from World War Two.

Worker 1: Oh. I thought you meant the sheila from *Prisoner*. Vinegar tits.

Worker 3: No. That was Vera Bennett you dick.

This banter, principally ageist in its nature, would be labelled ‘aggressive’ under Martin et al.’s (2003) humour styles model. Worker 2 (Bill) is being mocked as he is the eldest member of that work team and so too is Worker 1 who’s lack of knowledge about popular culture was also the butt of a joke and a derogatory statement directed at him – ‘you dick’, a truncated form of the insult ‘you dick-head’.

But Bill also had his ‘stir’ at the younger members of the work team calling Worker 1 ‘a joke’ and suggesting that contemporary music has no melody and is performed by pop stars without brains.

As Milner Davis (2009) observed ‘even strangers’ can be engaged in this way. The researcher in this instance was not known to the work team but was in no way immune from the banter. Being ‘knock-off time’ he was offered a beer, but declined opting for a soft drink instead. He was then asked an ice-breaking question which is especially familiar in south-eastern Australia where Australian Rules Football (AFL) is the predominant sport.

Worker 2: Who do you follow?

Researcher: Western Bulldogs.

Worker 1: Footers-bloody-cray. Haven’t won a flag in over 50 years.

Worker 3: No wonder you don’t drink.

Worker 1: Yeah. Nothin’ to celebrate.

[Explanatory note: The Western Bulldogs is an AFL team originally from the western Melbourne suburb of Footscray – hence the derogatory response ‘Footers-bloody-cray’. The last time this club won the competition’s premiership was 1954.]

As reported by De Groen and Kirkpatrick (2009), comedian Billy Birmingham, when interviewed by sports journalist Warwick Hadfield commented, ‘there are two great Australian pastimes: watching sport and taking the piss.’ The above exchange by workers with the researcher exemplifies this view of Australian culture. This type of banter is commonplace in Australia and although negative in its nature appears to define the bonding within the team. The interaction with a stranger, as exemplified here, suggests an acceptance of the outsider to the group.

eDiplomat, a website established as a ‘global portal for diplomats’ devoted to explaining cultural differences, suggests one needs to be mindful of humour when visiting other countries. eDiplomat advises travellers to Australia, ‘If you are teased, you are expected to reply in kind, with good humour. Such self- efficacy will increase an Australian's respect for you. They do not admire a subservient attitude.’

Milner Davis (2007) suggests that Australians believe that ‘taking the mickey’ is a national civil liberty. ‘Most Australians would agree that it is their democratic right to challenge in this way their elders, their betters, their enemies, their friends, and of course themselves.’ She also explains that most newcomers to the country need to have this Australian cultural characteristic explained to them. In a list prepared by Milner Davis (2007) entitled *Coping with Aussie Humour*, the final two recommendations are:

- Beware joining in (unless you know the rules)
- When you are insulted - rejoice - you are an Aussie too!

Therefore it should come as no surprise that many of the participants claiming aggressive and/or self-defeating (negative) humour as their preferred humour style in this study, also scored comparatively well on the original PsyCap factors of hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism.

A linear regression of the relationship between negative humour and workplace performance (analysed during, but not reported as part of, this study) produced a slightly negative [β coefficient (β_1) = - 0.09] relationship which may be of concern in some workplaces. This is an area begging for further research.

Appendix 13 – When humour isn't funny – a case study

In a case study reported by Taylor and Bain (2003), one part of an organisation has a grievance with another: in this case, workers versus management. The aggrieved workers use humour to help them confront their issues and to cope with the pressures they are feeling at work. In this situation, Taylor and Bain (2003) report that the more petty punitive actions that were taken against the discontented workers by management, the more the workers bonded as a group with their subversive humour being a vehicle for expressing their collective concerns. This was a deliberate strategy aimed at undermining management's authority. Jokes, mocking and lampoonery encapsulated serious messages. These were created and distributed by the disaffected workers to be communicated widely throughout the organisation. This campaign culminated in the organisation losing valuable contracts through the workers' subversive activities once the concerns were made public and reached media outlets. The use of humour to expose genuine workplace grievances which had otherwise been ignored by the management, 'sold' the message to attract the external attention that resulted in the organisation's public humiliation and subsequent loss of business. This case study emphasises that the existence of negative humour within workplaces can be extremely damaging and cannot be ignored.

Although the humour used in this example would be assessed as negative, within the aggrieved group this may have a positive effect. However, as the humour used is clearly negative and is viewed as such by the butt of their humour, in this scenario, management, the workers' behaviour is subversive and the overall outcomes for the organisation are negative. This case study reported by Taylor and Bain (2003) offers a strong warning that punitive managerial styles can lead to subversive humour with potentially damaging outcomes.
